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TANGAZA COLLEGE
THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

**RISE UP AND WALK: A Comparative Analysis Of Acts 3:1-10 And
Medical Miracles Verified For The Canonization Of Saints**

BY

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**A Long Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Bachelor of
Arts in Religious Studies**

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DEDICATION

To all of you boys and girls, women and men, who have been my teachers, classmates and fellow workers in the Lord's vineyard; and to my mother Theresa and my late father, Pius Odia, who taught me how to pray.

EPIGRAPH

"The kingdom of God has come...." (Mark 1:15)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

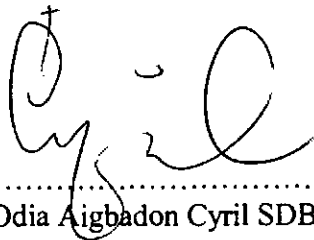
I give thanks to God the almighty Father; through the Son and in the Holy Spirit for the grace and love I have received in the preparation of this work. Thank you Fr. Tim Redmond for your provoking stimulation that helped me refine my thoughts and sharpen my enthusiasm. Special thanks to the kids of Nyumbani Children's Home from whom I have received so much in these past few years.

My sincere gratitude and prayers go to my confreres of Don Bosco Utume Community for their inspiration and unwavering love.

Finally, I wish to thank all who in one way or another have encouraged me through words and example. 'Your reward will be great in heaven'.

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this long essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed.....
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Date..... 14 2. 002

This long essay has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

Signed.....
 Fr. Tim Redmond

Date..... 14. 2. 2002

ABBREVIATIONS

GNT	Greek New Testament
LUTH	Lagos State University Teaching Hospital
LXX	Septuagint
NIV	New International Version
NJBC	The New Jerome Biblical Commentary
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
RSV	Revised Standard Version
UBS	United Bible Society

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The effects of the influence of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers are systematically presented in the Acts of the Apostles. The 'signs and wonders' contained therein are all attributed to the power of the risen Lord, the lamb that was 'once slain, but now standing'. The salvific work of Christ continues to influence the events of human beings in every age.

Miracles are very sensitive experiences to talk about. There are so many types and often, the subjective opinions of people so differ, that one might be tempted to conclude that there is nothing objective to be investigated about miracles. While some people *see* miracles *everywhere*, others do not believe in the miraculous.

Biblical miracles are signs of the Kingdom of God. There are other signs like the struggle for peace, righteousness, joy, and a very deep sense of hope in the future restoration of the world, which stems from a belief that the Kingdom of God has indeed come. Nevertheless, the early Christian community particularly preserved for the future Church, accounts of the miraculous, both in the life of Christ and even more dramatically, in the lives of the 'believers'. The significance of these miracles includes a constant reminder that the fundamental teaching of Jesus (that the kingdom of God has come) is true.

In the first chapter, one of such signs recorded in the lives of the early Church is studied exegetically. Acts 3:1-10 contains similarities with some of the (often distorted) signs and miracles of our own time, and since an individual opinion may be heavily subjective, the approach of this essay is to investigate how the ecclesial community, guided by the light of the Holy Spirit, is able to scrutinize similar

miracles of a medical nature, and come to an absolute certainty (in faith) that these contemporary signs are a *continuation* of the biblical ones.

In the second chapter, these divine signs are systematically evaluated to see how they fit into the eschatological dimension of the faith-experience of the Church.

In the third chapter, an attempt is made to compare and contrast the findings in the first and the second chapter.

CHAPTER ONE

EXEGESIS OF ACTS 3:1-10

1.1 Introduction

The coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost launched a new era in the ministry of the people of God. People who had denied Jesus were seen preaching with confidence and passion. The early Christian community felt the influence of this 'new life' and specific events in the life of the followers of Christ were recorded in the Acts of the Apostles. The healing of a lame beggar at a gate called 'beautiful', is one of the first signs worked by the apostles in the account of Luke in Acts.

The text reads:

Acts 3:1 Πέτρος δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννης ἀνέβαινον εἰς τὸ ἱερόν ἐπὶ τὴν ὥραν τῆς προσευχῆς τὴν ἐνάτην· 2 καὶ τις ἀνὴρ χλωδὸς ἐκ κοιλίας μητρὸς αὐτοῦ ὑπάρχων ἐβαστάζετο, ὃν ἐτίθουν καθ' ἡμέραν πρὸς τὴν θύραν τοῦ ἱεροῦ τὴν λεγομένην Ὠραίαν τοῦ αἰτεῖν ἐλεημοσύνην παρὰ τῶν εἰσπορευομένων εἰς τὸ ἱερόν· 3 ὃς ἰδὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην μέλλοντας εἰσιέναι εἰς τὸ ἱερόν, ἠρώτα ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν· 4 ἀτενίσας δὲ Πέτρος εἰς αὐτὸν σὺν τῷ Ἰωάννῃ εἶπεν, βλέψον εἰς ἡμᾶς· 5 ὁ δὲ ἐπέιχεν αὐτοῖς προσδοκῶν τι παρ' αὐτῶν λαβεῖν· 6 εἶπεν δὲ Πέτρος, Ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον οὐχ ὑπάρχει μοι, ὃ δὲ ἔχω τοῦτό σοι δίδωμι· ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ Ναζωραίου [ἔγειρε καὶ] περιπάτει· 7 καὶ πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν· παραχρῆμα δὲ ἑσπερώθησαν αἱ βάσεις αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ σφυδρά, 8 καὶ ἐξαλλόμενος ἕστη καὶ περιεπάτει καὶ εἰσῆλθεν σὺν αὐτοῖς

εἰς τὸ ἱερόν περιπατῶν καὶ ἀλλόμενος καὶ αἰνῶν τὸν θεόν 9
καὶ εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν περιπατοῦντα καὶ αἰνοῦντα τὸν
θεόν· 10 ἐπεγίνωσκον δὲ αὐτὸν ὅτι αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ πρὸς τὴν
ἐλεημοσύνην καθήμενος ἐπὶ τῇ Ὠραίᾳ Πύλῃ τοῦ ἱεροῦ καὶ
ἐπλήσθησαν θάμβους καὶ ἐκστάσεως ἐπὶ τῷ συμβεβηκότι αὐτῷ ¹

1.2 Delimitation of the Text

The *terminus a quo* of this miracle story is Acts chapter 3:1 and the *terminus ad quem*, Chapter 3:10.² It begins with Peter and John going to the temple (3.1) and end with the *wonder and amazement* of the people around, who are able to *recognize* a man who was lame, but now cured (3:10).

The first two chapters of Acts seem to be unconnected with this miracle story when one takes a glance at them. There is a certain kind of abruptness, which may also help to identify the *terminus a quo*.³ However, the *terminus ad quem* is more difficult to assert since the event of the miracle led to other consequences that will

¹ UBS GNT ³ RSV Reads: Acts 3:1 Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. 2 And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at that gate of the temple which is called Beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple. 3 Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms. 4 And Peter directed his gaze at him, with John, and said, "Look at us." 5 And he fixed his attention upon them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, "I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." 7 And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong. 8 And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God, 10 and recognized him as the one who sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.

² For the scope of this research, Acts 3 1-10 gives a narration of a miracle and from verse 11, the story continues with what happened after the miracle Commentators like William Macdonald, Ernst Haenchen, Luke Timothy Johnson, Hans Conzelmann propose this delimitation, focusing on the miracle story per se.

³ Cf. Hans Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, Trans. James Limburg et al (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 25. Conzelmann is of the opinion that this was originally an independent story, which was later edited and inserted in the corpus of Acts. He also sees this as a way of explaining the suggestion of some scholars that the miracle may have been performed by Peter only.

be reported in the next couple of chapters in Acts.⁴ A way to fix a *terminus ad quem* includes the identification of the Form and Structure. The form of this pericope from verse 1-10 is that of a Miracle Story, and from verse 11, we find a *speech*. Though the speech was occasioned by the proceeding miracle, one can still distinguish between a miracle and a series of events that proceeded from the miracle.⁵

1.3 Textual criticism

There are a couple of variants in the text of Acts 3:1-10. In the '*Interpreter's Bible*', G. H. C. McGregor concentrates his textual criticism of this passage on the *Jerusalem 'A'* and '*B*' sources and compares them with the '*Western text*'.⁶ The development of the idea that this passage may have come from *Jerusalem source 'A'* links the entire pericope to the "continuation of the original Markean narrative"⁷

√.1 Πέτρος δὲ

Codex Bezae adds ἐν δὲ ταῖς ἡμέραις (in these days) at the beginning of chapter 3.

The addition may have been from the "origin of the codex from which D was

⁴ Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, The Anchor Bible, (NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing group, Inc., 1998), 279. Others like Luke Timothy Johnson also see verse 11 as an introduction to the speech of Peter to the crowd (Acts 3: 12-26), Cf. L. T. Johnson *The Acts of Apostles*, in *Sacra Pagina*, vol 5, Daniel J. Harrington, ed. (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1992) 67, stating that the entire verse 11 "is reworked by Codex D."

⁵ Ernst Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers Limited, 1971), 202.

⁶ Textual critics identify two major text traditions in the available text of the Acts of the Apostles (Jerusalem A and B) Cf. Raymond Brown, *Introduction to the New Testament*, (NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1997), 317.

⁷ G. H. C. McGregor *The Acts of the Apostles*, in George Arthur Buttrick, et al. eds., *The Interpreter's Bible*, vol. 9, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1982), 54. The most puzzling of this conclusion is that Lake suggests that 'the John who accompanied Peter was not the apostle but John Mark, who was traditionally the interpreter of Peter'. And from this *Textual Criticism* which takes its starting point from the *Source Analysis*, he proposes an explanation of why the John with Peter was not given any prominence in this miracle account. Harnack's source analysis also concludes that this

copied.”⁸ Ernst Haenchen interprets this addition found in D as due to the felt “absence of a connective”⁹ Codex Bezae adds: τὸ δελινόν (*the afternoon-* having a sense of ‘towards the evening’) after ἱερον (Temple). This addition specifies the time of the afternoon the event occurred. The biblical language used in this section by Luke may have been derived from the LXX and was probably using a primitive source. This may buttress Ernst’s suggestion that this addition by codex D may be connected to Exod 29:39.¹⁰

v.2 For παρὰ τῶν εἰσπορευομένων (lit. From the ones entering), D has παρὰ αὐτῶν εἰσπορευομένων αὐτῶν C. K. Barrett adds that “the first αὐτῶν in this reading has been thought to be a Semitism”¹¹

v.3 ὃς ἰδὼν Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην (lit. Who seeing Peter and John)

present passage belongs to Jerusalem source A and source B continued after the subsequent verses that come later on in the narration.

⁸ Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary On The Greek New Testament, 2nd edition, (NY: American Bible Society, 1994), 265. Citing James Hardly Ropes, The Text of Acts vol. III of The Beginning Of Christianity, Part I, The Acts of The Apostles, edited by F.J. Foakes Jackson And Kirsopp Lake, London, 1926.

⁹ Ernst Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publishers Limited, 1985). 197.

¹⁰ Cf. Johnson The Acts of Apostles 73. In Exodus 29:39, the evening Tamid was called *the evening one* (τὸ δελινόν). Having mentioned the hour of the day (9th hour –3pm), Hans Conzelmann in Acts of the Apostles, sees this time reference as referring specifically to the ‘evening sacrifice’ as suggested by Dan 9:21, Num 28:3-4, 8, Jdt 9:1, Ezek 46:13-15, Josephus Ant. 3.101 § 237, 14.4.3 § 65 Str-B2.696-702. According to Daniel 6:10 and 9:21, one of the three hours of prayer coincided with the evening Tamid sacrifice, which was offered up at about the third hour of the afternoon (Cf. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 198. D’s addition of the adverb τὸ δελινόν may recall the exodus understanding to the reader (Cf. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 198), Metzger notes that δελινος appears only nine times in the LXX but nowhere else in the NT. (Cf. Bruce M. Metzger, A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament 2nd ed., 266).

¹¹ C. K. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles vol. 1 Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994, 180. Some commentators see this Semitism as a representation of the idiomatic Aramaic proleptic pronoun in Greek. Barrett also joins Ropes in assuming the probability of a scribal error since this error is not found in D (*ab his qui ingrediebantur*) their conclusion is that the scribe’s error made the insertion of the second αὐτῶν, presumably he meant *from them as they were going on...* (Cf. Barrett, citing James Hardly Ropes, The Text of Acts in The Beginning of Christianity (Beg) vol. III, 1926, 26).

There is a variance in the western text (D h mae) which begins this sentence with οὐτος ἀτενίσας τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἰδὼν Barrett notes that “the use of the relative is characteristic of Acts.”¹²

There is also a variation in the use of λαβεῖν :

ἠρώτα ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν' (lit. Asked arms to receive). The western and Byzantine witnesses omit λαβεῖν which probably only serves to intensify the (ἠρώτα) asking. According to Metzger, λαβεῖν (to receive) is found in most witnesses and he is of the opinion that λαβεῖν “seems to overload the expression.”¹³

v.4 ἀτενίσας δὲ Πέτρος

In D (d h, intuitus) has ἐμβλέψας instead of ἀτενίσας (gazing) and where Peter says: βλέψον εἰς ἡμᾶς' (look at us), D (d h, a (d) spice) has in place of βλέψού, ἀτενίσου. One text would then read: “and looking, Peter...said ‘gaze at us’” and the other would be “and gazing, Peter ...said... ‘look at us’” The obvious difference here is an interchange.¹⁴

¹² Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 181, citing B D R^s 293.2, n.12. Though this variance does not affect the substance of the narrative, Barrett maintains that it enlightens the vividness. He also notes that the use of ἀτενίζειν “may have been borrowed from v. 4, (where D has ἐμβλέψας) [and is of the opinion that] ἀτενίζειν (a word characteristic of Acts) and (ἐμ)βλέπειν seem to be mixed up in the two texts” (Cf. Barrett., 181). In general this variance in v.3-5 between the B-text and the Western text is highly noticeable. Lake and Cadbury note that “if it were not for general considerations it would be tempting here to accept the western text as original and regard the B-text as an accommodation to the typical vocabulary of a miraculous story” in Metzger, 267, citing (Lake and Henry J. Cadbury, The Beginnings of Christianity, vol. 4, London: 1933, 33).

¹³ Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 266. Many witnesses have λαβεῖν and it is omitted by most minuscules (D P) of the western and Byzantine witnesses.

¹⁴ Cf. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 181.

v.5 ἐπεῖχεν αὐτοῖς (*paid heed to them, fixed attention upon them*) “D has the participle ἀτενίσας”¹⁵ though it corresponds with the variant in 3:4.¹⁶ However, the attempt by Barrett to understand the reason for the variant is plausible.

v.6 περιπάτει (*walk*)

Some manuscripts read ἔγειρε καὶ περιπάτει (*rise and walk, get up and walk*)¹⁷ while others have only περιπάτει.¹⁸ Although most manuscripts have ἔγειρε καὶ περιπάτει “a majority of the committee [of scholars] considered it more probable the words were present originally; in deference, however, to the strong combination of the witnesses that support the shorter reading..., it was decided to enclose them within square brackets”¹⁹ (ἔγειρε καὶ) περιπάτει

v.7 ἤγειρεν αὐτόν (*he raised him*)

Citing a variance with other manuscripts, Barrett suggests that the αὐτόν “should be omitted”²⁰

¹⁵ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 181.

¹⁶ ἐπεῖχεν (*pay heed*) and βλέψον (*look*) go together from the same manuscript while ἀτενίσας (*gazing*) also makes sense from the second manuscript. This shows that the variance in the text probably the same from v.3 to v.5, basing this assumption on its consistency.

¹⁷ A, C, E, Ψ, 095, 33, 36, 81, Koinē text-tradition.

¹⁸ B D cop^{sa}

¹⁹ Metzger, *A Textual Commentary*, 267. Barrett feels that the shorter form is ‘almost certainly correct’ (Barrett, 183) while Johnson suggests the exact opposite: “is surely part of the original text”, explaining its allusion to Jesus’ resurrection in this and the next verse. He sees a play in words that the “power that comes from the prophet whom God ‘raised up’ is ‘raising this man’” (Johnson, *The Acts of Apostles*, 66). Others like Joseph A. Fitzmyer mention the variance but do not attempt to give any clue to the reason or the solution (Cf. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Act of the Apostles*, in the Anchor Bible, (NY.: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc, 1998), 279).

²⁰ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 183. He points out that this second αὐτόν in the same verse may have been added in order to prevent ‘even a moment’s doubt’ whether the preceding ἤγειρεν was to be understood ‘as a transitive or intransitive’.

In this same verse, D h mae adds ἐστάθη καί after παραχρῆμα²¹ (*immediately, at once*) and there is a variant in the spelling of σφυδρά (*ankle bones or simply ankles*) in later manuscripts that use the more usual form of σφυρά²²

v.8 περιεπάτει

Some manuscripts have variations in this verse (D, E h) and render with shorter expressions. καὶ ἐξαλλόμενος ἔστη (*leaping up he stood*) is present in D (am h Iren) and it is said to be “due to conflation with the B-text”.²³

v. 9 εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν

There is the addition of αὐτὸν after εἶδεν in some manuscripts (E P 462 ghp - εἶδεν αὐτὸν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν). This position is described as being “less natural and more Semitic”²⁴

v.10 αὐτὸς ἦν ὁ πρὸς τὴν ἐλεημοσύνην καθήμενος (*this was the one sitting for alms*)
“authorities are fairly evenly divided” in their understanding of the usage of αὐτὸς²⁵

²¹ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 183, suggesting that it could be an attempt to fill out the details and thus give a more vivid picture of the scenario.

²² Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 184 states σφυδρα is probably original even if the form seems inappropriate.

²³ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 184. Also Metzger, A Textual Commentary, 263. Some scholars see the absence of this expression in some manuscripts as being original.

²⁴ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 185 supporting the opinion that the usual reading εἶδεν πᾶς ὁ λαὸς αὐτὸν (all the people saw him) should be preferred.

²⁵ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 185. B D E has οὗτος and P⁷⁴ A C 36 81pc lat Lcf has αὐτοῦς

1.4 Form and structure

This pericope “is a narrative, including a miracle story, a healing worked by Peter, the spokesman, accompanied by a silent partner, John”.²⁶ From verse 1-2 all the major characters are introduced: Peter and John, the lame man, *people* and the place (temple gate). From verse 3 the focus changes to that of lame man.²⁷ The use of the verb λαβεῖν (to receive) at the end of verse 3 and verse 5 seems to be deliberate. Verse 4, which expresses Peter’s request: look at us, (βλέψου εἰς ἡμᾶς) is an intercalation between verses 3 and 5

The third section is from verse 6-8. Verse 6 changes the focus from the lame man back to Peter: εἶπεν δὲ Πέτρος (and Peter said...). This third part of the structure (Verse 6-8) describes the core of the event.²⁷ In verse 6, the *words* of miracle are uttered, and in verse 7, the action accompanying the words by the same one who had said the words καὶ πιάσας αὐτὸν τῆς δεξιᾶς χειρὸς ἤγειρεν αὐτόν· (and seizing him by the right hand he raise him). Verse 8, the end of this third part of the structure, describes the effect of the miracle (in 7 verbs); what Jerome Crowe describes as an “explosion of verbs”²⁸.

The fourth and last section (verse 9-10) brings back the original scene (before the miracle in verse 1-2) to mind. But this time, the disciples are absent; we have only the people, the once lame but now cured man, the gate, and the Temple. It is as if the reader is to discover who has actually performed the miracle. This structure of

²⁶ Joseph A. Fitzmyer, The Act of the Apostles, in the Anchor Bible, (NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc, 1998), 276.

²⁷ Cf. Jerome Crowe, The Acts, In the New Testament Message vol. 8, Dublin: Veritas Publications 1979), 20.

²⁸ Crowe, The Acts, 20.

(verses) 1-2 / 3-5 / 6-8 / 9-10 presents the story in scenes, which is common in Luke-Acts.

From the structure presented above, there are some indications that point out the form of the passage. It is a miracle story having similar characteristic as those of the synoptics: a scene, an encounter, a change (healing), and reaction to the change by the one who performs, receives and others who may be present. Nevertheless, we also find some differences between miracles in Acts (in general) and those of the synoptics²⁹ In Acts it is clear that there is a *power* working through them as if using them as mere agents. More graphically, similarities in “linguistic details”³⁰ like ‘rise’, ‘I say to you’, ‘walk’, ‘glorifying God’, ‘amazement of them all’ etc, also help to elucidate the resemblance between Acts 3:1-10 and the miracle story of Luke 5:17-26. Generally, commentators agree that the *form* and *structure* of this passage is “familiar in both biblical and non-biblical parallels”³¹

²⁹ Conzelmann, moderately emphasizing that “the miracle of the story of Acts no longer exhibit the strict structure of those found in the synoptic” even though the typical stylistic characteristics can still be recognized. Cf. Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, 25.

³⁰ Johnson The Acts of Apostles, 71. The healing story follows the usual pattern of such accounts in the gospel tradition. But here, it is unusually well developed in each of its parts “such descriptive intricacy invites speculation on the possible deeper resonance of meaning the story may contain” One is always left wondering: who is behind the scene? This miracle story is similar to that of the healing of the paralytic in Luke 5: 17–26 (Cf. Matt. 3:1-8, Mark 2:1-12). In both the synoptics and Acts, the healing of a paralytic brought about a question of *authority*. Jesus had to justify this, the source of his authority to forgive sin while the apostles Peter and John in the Acts would have to defend themselves before the Sanhedrin on account of the authority by which they teach.

³¹ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 175. The patterns described here are seven (1) The stage, (2) severity of the disease, (3) confrontation, (4) word of command/action, (5) suddenness (παραχρήμα) v. 7, (6) completeness (ἐξαλλόμενος leaping up, ἔστη he stood, περιεπάτει walked, περιπατῶν walking) vv.8-9, (7) effect on the onlookers (θάμβους with amazement, ἐκστάσεως bewilderment).

1.5 Context

1.5.1. Remote context

The remote context of this pericope is a rather broad one. It begins from chapter 2:1 and ends in chapter 5:42. After the introduction to his continued work in Acts 1: 1-11, Luke went on to solve the problem of Judas who betrayed Jesus. His replacement by Matthias is seen as a divine choice.³²

After *the 12* have been 'completed' (Acts 1:26) with the addition of Matthias, chapter 2 begins with the coming of the Holy Spirit. Since the coming of the Holy Spirit, life in the Christian community was never the same again. The manifestations of the presence of the Holy Spirit will be the basic theme in the entire book of Acts. That is why 2:1 is seen as the beginning (at least remotely) of this miracle story of 3:1-10.³³

The end of the remote context (5:42) summarizes the daily frequenting of the temple by the apostles and their teaching about Christ Jesus. Chapter 6 begins an entirely new section containing the choosing of the seven "deacons" which will introduce the spreading out of the Christians throughout the countryside of Judea and Samaria³⁴

³² Act. 1:12-26 present the apostles with 'the women' and Mary the mother of Jesus (1:14) in an atmosphere of prayer and deep union (ὁμοθυμαδόν-with one mind). Peter seems to have taken the initiative of the replacement and this replacement was to fulfill the Scriptures (πληρωθῆναι την γραφήν) and the words of the Holy Spirit.

³³ Fitzmyer sees this miracle as a continuation of the miracle of Jesus in the gospel of Luke and stresses the fact that it is performed "in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazorean" (3:6b ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ ναζωραίου) contextually, it links with the *Pentecostal spirit*. It is thus the first explicit example of the 'many wonders and signs brought through the apostles' (2:43) and the example of the "signs" of "Joel's words (Joel 2:28-32) quoted in Acts 2:19". Fitzmyer, Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary, The Anchor Bible, (NY: Double Day Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 1998), 276.

³⁴ From the Pentecost event in chapter 2 till end of chapter 5, there are manifestations of the Holy Spirit: courageous preaching (2:14-36), new converts joining the flock, Baptism (2: 43-47), miraculous signs and wonders (3:1-10) and bold defence and zealous confidence to proclaim the good news and suffer for it, without compromise. as individual and as a community. (3:11-5:42). Chapter

1.5.2 Immediate context

The immediate context of the pericope (3:1-10) begins from 3:1 and ends in 4:22. It begins after a general summary of the life of the believers has been presented towards the end of the chapter 2. (2:43 ‘ Many wonders and sign were being done by the apostles’). Here in 3:1 it is as if an example is shown of how the *wonders and signs* were done. It could also be seen as a story on its own³⁵ which the early community found as illustrating a major theme in the life of the believers. However, some commentators see it as having a “clear connection with 2:43”³⁶. But what remains rather unambiguous is the fact that the beginning of the pericope (3:1) suggests a story or narration that flows till 4:22 without losing sight of the event in question. It also begins without any connective verb or clause (at the end of chapter 2). Above all, its form is different from what precedes it in chapter 2. It is a miracle story that can be divided in three parts: 3:1-10 (the miracle itself), 3: 11-26 (Peter’s speech to the wondering crowd) and 4:1-22 (Peter and John before the priests, captain of the temple, and the Sadducees). At the end of this immediate context (4:22), the reader is reminded about the man who was miraculously cured; “for the man on whom the sign of healing had been performed was more than forty years old”, (Acts 4:22). If one does not read the story up to this point it would not be

6-9 introduce a different theme of practical problems severe persecutions, the conversion of Saul and the mission of Philip (8:4-40).

³⁵ Barrett agrees that 3:1 begins abruptly and maintains that the original story may not have been connected with the Pentecost event (2:1-41) or the description of the early community (2: 42 –47). It could have been intended to be an example of frequent healings (Cf. 4:30, 5:12, 15, 16) Cf.Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles, vol. 1, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1994), 174 -175.

³⁶ Richard J. Dillon Acts of the Apostles in NJBC, 735.

possible to get a clear picture of the one who was healed in 3:1-10. After 4:22, the story turns back to the community of believers and how they were praying for the disciples while they had to face the Jewish authority (Act. 4:23 ff). Fitzmyer sees (3:1-11) as “a narrative including a miracle story”³⁷ and the interpretation of this miracle is elaborated in chapters 3 & 4 (3:1-4:22), which sums up the immediate context of the pericope³⁸

1.6. Parallels

As an entire unit (taking into consideration the remote context of the pericope of Acts 3:1-10) one can graphically see different parallels that run from chapter 3 to chapter 5.

3: 1 – 10	5: 12b – 16	Healing
3: 11 – 26	5: 12b	Solomon’s portico
4: 1 – 7	5: 17 – 18	Confrontation with the Sanhedrin
4: 8 – 12	5: 29 – 32	Peter’s speech
4: 13 – 22	5: 40 – 42	Reprimanded & Freed

Secondly, as a miracle story, Fitzmyer identified a larger group of parallels:

³⁷ Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, Anchor Bible, (NY: Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc. 1998), 276.

³⁸ Some commentators see no real break from verse 3:1-5:42 though the materials contained there in could be divided into sections. The remote context (3:1-5:42) is rather generally accepted. The immediate context on the other hand would depend on the different parts of the narration that is relevant for the understanding of the miracle itself. As in this case, the miracle and the speeches of

This first miracle that Peter performs is followed by others: Ananias and Saphira (5:1-11); Sick cured by Peter's shadow (5:14 -16); Aeneas (9:32-34); Tabitha (9:36-41). There is, moreover, a certain parallelism with those to be performed by Paul: Elymas (13:8-11); Cripple at Lystra (14:8-10); Slave girl at Philippi (16:16-18); Sick cured by Paul's handkerchiefs or aprons (19:11-12); Eutychus (20:7-12); Father of Publius and other people on Malta (28:7-9). One notes the striking use of similar vocabulary in these parallel stories.³⁹

In the gospel according to Luke, one can also find a parallel between Acts 3:1-10 and Luke 5:17-26. The healing of a paralytic which comes just after a miraculous catch of fish by Peter in an emotion-charged encounter with Jesus (Luke 5:1-11). For a reader of Luke-Acts, "the parallel between the accounts would not be missed: the apostles have the same power to heal as was at work in Jesus"⁴⁰

By and large, the main part of this miracle narrative that brings other similar narratives to mind is the very person who was cured: a cripple. His deformity or sickness provokes a recollection in the mind of the reader of the cripple cured by Jesus. Secondly, the fact that it was performed by the apostles and not Jesus (directly) calls to mind other healing miracles performed by either the same apostle (Peter) or other apostles (e.g. Paul).⁴¹

Peter are often grouped together (as the latter flowing from the earlier), beginning from 3:1 and ending 4:22 Cf. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 175.

³⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 276

⁴⁰ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 71. Johnson also sees a parallel between the question of "authority" (Luke 5: 21-24; Act 4:7) and concludes like Fitzmyer, that the literary parallelism used by Luke serves to emphasize that the apostles are prophetic successors of Jesus.

⁴¹ The parallels of this pericope both in the gospel according to Luke and within Act of the Apostles (Luke 15:17-26, Acts 14:8-13), are so identified because of the "elements of symmetry" among them. Cf. Richard J. Dillon *Acts of the Apostles* in NJBC, 735. Other allusions to this passage usually refer to some particular word, phrase or mode of expression e.g. Leaping (Acts 3:8) similarly the "name of

1.7. A detailed analysis

v. 1 *Now Peter and John were going up to the Temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.*

This verse begins as a journey narrative. Two people are going somewhere at a particular time. Both names are mentioned (Peter and John), their destination (Temple) and the time (hour of prayer, the ninth). This is the reason why some commentators see this passage as an independent story that was later edited and inserted into this part of the corpus of Acts.⁴² The names Peter and John (Πέτρος καὶ Ἰωάννης) along with James the brother of John “had formed an inner circle admitted to a special intimacy with the Lord”⁴³ (Mark 14:3, 9:2).

The RSV renders the Greek δε as ‘now’; Johnson sees this as a transition, which “connects the healing narrative—‘a wonder’ done through the apostles (2:43)—with the previous summary: they are ‘frequenting the temple and praising God’ (2:46-47)”⁴⁴

Jesus” could also be an allusion to the Baptismal Formulae in the synoptics and epistles. The parallels discussed in this part of the paper, refers mainly to the entire passage and not to the selected words.

⁴² Cf. Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, 25.

⁴³ F. F. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, (Michigan: William. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1965), 103. The question of the actual identity of the two disciples has received various suggestions from a variety of commentators. While many propose that John is the brother of James (son of Zebedee), some say he could have been John Mark who was “traditionally the interpreter of Peter” (Buttrick, et al. eds., The Acts of the Apostles, 54.) Those of this opinion use this argument to partly explain John’s apparent passivity in the entire narrative and even see it as a later addition to justify the authenticity of a testimony which is better esteemed when there is a witness attesting to the fact in question. (Cf. Richard J. Dillon Acts of The Apostles In NJBC, 735.), see also Luke 22:8, Gal 2:9, Acts 4:13, 19, 8:14.

⁴⁴ Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 164. Though the story can stand on it’s own, it’s beginning with ‘now’ (also trans. ‘one day’ Cf. NRSV, NIV, and ‘once’ Cf. Fitzmyer, The Acts of The Apostles, 277) seems to be an editor’s technique to linking it with the sequence of events that has been happening since Pentecost.

They are going *up* to the temple,⁴⁵ and since it is at the hour of prayer, one would suppose they were simply going to pray as good Jews. However, what would happen on their journey would ‘disrupt’ the original motive of their *going up to the temple* and becomes an occasion to proclaim the risen Christ.

A final detail in this first verse is what looks like a deliberate stress on the actual time that they were on their way towards the temple area (*at the hour of prayer, the ninth*). This may call to mind the hour of death of Jesus (Luke 23:44).⁴⁶ At this time of the day, they were probably going for the second of the three daily prayers, which could be said even if one is not in the temple.⁴⁷

v. 2. and a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called beautiful to ask alms of those who entered the temple.

The literal translation of the first part of this verse would read: *crippled from his mother's womb*⁴⁸ Bruce explains that in the writings of Luke, “κοιλία always means ‘womb’.”⁴⁹ Though Bruce does not show the investigation of all the Lukan usage of this word, he clearly categorized the Lukan usage of it in the same way the word was

⁴⁵ The fact that the temple of Jerusalem was situated on a high plain, (though not on a mountain), makes it easier for the reader to understand why going up to the temple can be understood literally (*ἀνέβαινον, they were going up* Cf. Luke 18:10, John 7:14). But in addition to that, Biblical theology reveals that *going up* also has a symbolic meaning because *ἀνέβαινον* is “the customary expression for going up to the temple, even if it is not uphill” (Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 25. Cf. Isa 37:1, 38:22 (LXX)). In this case, the going up is more of a spiritual disposition than a physical climbing of a huge mountain! The text does not tell us where in the temple the duo were heading to, and as such, *temple* here could be understood in a very generic way. Conzelmann interprets τὸ ἱερόν (the temple) as implying “the whole temple area” (Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 25).

⁴⁶ There was darkness from the 6th to the 9th hour and a mention of the temple (*ναοῦ* lit. *Shrine—in the temple*) and its curtain (or veil) torn into two. The similarity here is the time 9th hour and something happening in the temple with deep theological significance for Jewish Christians.

⁴⁷ Cf. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 198.

⁴⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 277.

used in the LXX (Gen 25:23, Deut 28:4, 11; Job 1:21, Jer 1:5, Isa 49:1 Judg 16:17, Ps 22:11) from the Hebrew *beten* (בֶּטֶן). In “classical and medical Greek κοιλία denotes the digestive tract. Luke uses it for the womb, following LXX which thus renders *beten* (בֶּטֶן).”⁵⁰ The emphasis here for Luke is probably to note the duration of the sickness or situation.⁵¹

The man lame from birth was ‘being carried in’. This suggests that though the man was laid everyday, on this particular day he had not yet been laid but was still being carried. The detail of the regularity of his being laid (daily) helps clarify the doubt as to how long the man has been around the temple gate. Those who carry the man are not mentioned. ‘*People would lay him daily*’ suggests that it was not a particular person who brings him daily. ‘people’ here could refer to good neighbours or

⁴⁹ Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 103. Ref. Matt 19:12, John 3:4, Acts 14:8, Gal 1:15. This does not dispute the fact that it is also used for referring to the digestive organs.

⁵⁰ Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 198. בֶּטֶן has a variety of usage like *offspring, begotten, etc.* However, it is generally used to refer to things related to the generation of another. (Cf. William L. Holladay, ed., A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament, (Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1971, 37-38). In Greek κοιλία is used for both *belly(or organ of digestion)* and *womb (reproduction)* (Cf. Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, 277).

⁵¹ Though some make use of this *medicus terminus* (and others in Luke) to infer the author’s medical knowledge, the debate as to whether Luke was in fact a physician clearly goes beyond the usage of this *medicus terminus* in this verse. The man is presented as one who has never walked. He is lame from birth and *being carried*. He is laid *daily* at that gate. The lame (χωλός) were a categorized group of the *blemished* in Jewish liturgical spirituality. In Lev 21:16-20, the lame are among those who were not allowed to *draw near* to offer the *bread* and consequently excluded from the priesthood. Cf. Lev 2:16-20 (RSV) “for no one who has a blemish shall draw near, one who is blind or lame, one who has a mutilated face or limb too long, or one who has a broken foot or a broken hand, or a hunch-back or a dwarf, or a man with a blemish in his eyes or an itching disease or scabs or crushed testicles” The same was applicable for a lame lamb which is considered blemished and unfit for sacrifice (Cf. Deut 15:21, Mal 1:8, 13) Cf. Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 65.

Other Jewish sources attest to the fact that the lame would only be allowed to sit at the entrance of the temple. A distinction was however made between cripples who could move about and those who could not. The latter were prohibited from entering. Barrett referring to the work of Jeremias (*Jerusalem* 117, *Shabbath* 6.8) states that “cripples who could get about with a stump were obviously allowed in the at part of the temple that was forbidden to Gentiles, but for those who were altogether lame or legless and had to be carried around on a padded seat, these were forbidden” (Cf. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 180).

relatives. The fact that he was being carried shows that he could not walk and probably had never ever walked (since he is lame from 'birth').⁵²

The *beautiful gate* remains perhaps the most unknown detail of the story. Every reader remembers it but no one is sure where it is exactly. Conzelmann in his *excursus* on the beautiful gate gives a wide range of possibilities, but concludes that the "designation 'beautiful gate' is not found in Jewish description of the temple, either in Josephus or in the Mishnah"⁵³ What one is left with is all the reasonable possibilities. The three most common are: [a] the *Shushan gate*; so called because it has the portrait of the palace of Shushan on it. The major limitation of this proposal is that it seems beggars were not allowed to sit there.⁵⁴ [b] *Nicanor gate*: there were probably two Nicanor gates, one which was leading from the court of the Gentiles to the court of the women, and another, which was from the court of the women to the court of Jewish men. Fitzmyer hints that it was probably a single gate that was having two names.⁵⁵ However, a Nicanor gate is described as being "made of Corinthian bronze, probably separating the courts of the women the Gentiles."⁵⁶ Bruce notes that it is a gate that is "far exceeding in value those plated with silver

⁵² The word *χωλός* is sometimes used to refer to those who limp. However, since the man is described as one who is been carried (*ἔβαστάζετο*) and placed (*ἔτιθουσι*) some commentators see this style as a middle voice and suggest a possible reading like: *had himself carried* especially because of the 3rd person impersonal plural, *placed*. This is an attempt to present the man born lame as being equally unable to move about. Barrett nevertheless rejects this idea suggested by a few commentators. He also refutes the fact 3 pm in the afternoon was a wrong time of the day to bring one to beg, and that Luke may have only adapted an old Aramaic story. He concludes that the style and language is originally Lukan. (Cf. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 178-79.)

⁵³ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 26. Many commentators seem to agree with this.

⁵⁴ Cf. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 279-80.

⁵⁵ Cf. Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 277-8. This is in line with those who hold that the gate is the same as the *Corinthian bronze* (Nicanor's gate) mentioned by Josephus in *Bell.* II 411, V195 & 201-6, VII 293 which led from the court of the women to that of the Gentiles suspected to have been wrongly placed in the *Mishnah* as the gate leading from the Women the Men. (Cf. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 198).

⁵⁶ Richard J. Dillon *Acts of The Apostles*, in NJBC, 735.

and set in gold”⁵⁷ The third opinion [c] is radically different from a and b above: the name beautiful could have been derived only after the miracle has been performed. In this case “Luke depicts him carried into the temple through the gate in order to stress the symbolic change that will come into his life”.⁵⁸ This verse ends with the reason why the man was laid at the entrance to the temple: *to ask alms of those who entered the temple*. We come to know his occupation; begging. So two clear factors emerge: a lame man and a beggar. *Those who entered the temple* were suppose to have alms with them if gifts were to be offered.⁵⁹ In Jewish spirituality almsgiving was linked with justice. However, the rabbis did not institutionalize the sharing of possessions. Johnson adds that an institutionalization of the sharing of possessions would “make the practice of this commandment impossible.”⁶⁰ Nevertheless, a clear notion was that giving alms always had meritorious benefits for both the giver and the receiver.⁶¹

The Lukan usage of *temple* here is rather vague. At this point, it suffices to keep τὸ ἱερόν as the general temple complex. When *temple* (τὸ ἱερόν) is used in the next verse, it will require some distinction.

⁵⁷ Bruce, Acts of the Apostles, 106, citing Josephus (B J v.5.3).

⁵⁸ Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, 278. Also, Buttrick, et al. eds., The Acts of the Apostles, 54), Other major commentaries also include this third possibility. But going a step further, Barrett, while admitting ambiguities, suggests that ὡραῖος in extra-biblical usage need not be translated as ‘beautiful’. “... and even if ὡραῖα is a corruption of *aurea*, golden... we do not know where it [the gate] was located” (Barrett, A Critical and exegetical, 179-80. What seems to be clear from available sources is that there were about nine gates of the sanctuary. (Cf. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 104).

⁵⁹ Barrett, The Acts of the Apostles, 180.

⁶⁰ Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 65. Sedakâ (almsgiving) and dikiosynē (justice) are strongly connected (Cf. John L. McKenzie, Dictionary of the Bible, Bangalore: Asian Trading Corporation, 1983, 21 and 742), Ref. Tob 1:3, 16, 2:14, 4:7-11, 12:8-9. Luke 11:41, 12:33, Acts 9:36, 10:2, 4, 31, 24:17. The believers have begun having things in common (Acts 2:44-47) and it is going to be a contrast between *giving* alms and *sharing* the life of Jesus.

⁶¹ Cf. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 199.

v. 3 seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked for alms

Presumably, the beggar is still being carried (v. 2 ἐβαστάζετο) and if the narrative flow is being held, it would imply that while this lame man was *being carried*, he saw two men and since the two men were about to enter the temple, he asked them for alms. Fitzmyer suggests that at this point of the encounter, the beggar had not recognized anything ‘special in this pair of Temple visitors,’⁶² he was probably going about his usual practice. The focus of the narration is still on the beggar (since v.2). He has been introduced and what he does daily has been presented. He saw Peter and John: here again, the name of Peter is mentioned first and John is added (as a companion). The apparent passivity of John will be constant throughout the narration. Peter and John were *about to go into the temple*. “Presumably, Peter and John are still outside; this suggests that the Beautiful Gate was an outer gate of the Temple”,⁶³ though one cannot be certain. Haenchen, suggests that Peter and John at this point were proceeding towards the sanctuary⁶⁴ where they met this lame man who was *being carried* at the gate.

The lame beggar asked them for alms. This request has long been anticipated by the description of what the unnamed lame beggar does daily at the temple area in the first verse. In the Greek text, the asking is followed by an expectation (ἠρώτα

⁶² Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 278.

⁶³ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 181. This presumption is important in the location of the unknown *beautiful gate*. But the Lukan ambiguity of ἱερὸν still remains. (Cf. v.2). ἱερὸν could be used for the entire temple area (including the outer court yards), but at the same time, Barrett agrees that it could also imply only the central sanctuary. In Hebrew, there is a difference in the words used for the different parts of the temple שְׂדֵי הַמִּזְבֵּחַ (τὸ ἱερὸν) whole complex of buildings belonging to the sanctuary on the hill of the temple, לְיְהוָה (ὁ ναός) is the temple proper (main veranda) and קֹדֶשׁ קְדָשִׁים (sanctum and holy of holies). The use of τὸ ἱερὸν, or its modification (used here 6 times in 10 verses) does not specify the part of the temple (Cf. Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 199).

ἐλεημοσύνην λαβεῖν lit. *Asked alms to receive*).⁶⁵ The flow of the narrative puts the apostles in a situation of lack of prior preparation. There is no clue as to whether they were expecting anything surprising at that moment. However, for the reader of this episode, interest has been roused to know what the response of the apostles would be. This response comes in the following verse. It was not a hurriedly accomplished response. The pace of the movement is now slowed down.

v. 4 and Peter directed his gaze at him, with John, and said, "look at us."

This verse can be described as the 'contact verse'. So far characters and stage have been the detail of the narration. Now, a contact is being established between the apostles and the lame beggar. He has two problems: lameness and poverty. He asks to be helped to cope with the former (poverty), but the description of the encounter slowly begins to change. *Peter directed his gaze at him* graphically introduces a personal contact. "Here as in Acts 13:9, the looking is meant to establish the inner contact necessary for the miracle."⁶⁶ With the use of ἀτενίσας (looking intently), the gaze becomes deliberate and not just casual. It is a deliberate response to the *seeing* (ἰδὼν in v. 3) of the apostles by the beggar which probably carried along with it a deep desire of the heart and an inner longing. The request: 'look at us', is an invitation to the lame man. It could have been motivated by the fact that his request

⁶⁴ Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 199.

⁶⁵ Cf. Alfred Marshall, The Interlinear NRSV-NIV Parallel New Testament in Greek and English, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), 345. The classical use of ἐρωτᾶν means *to ask a question* rather than *to make a request*, but in later Greek (papyri as well as LXX and NT) it came to be equivalent to αἰτεῖν (without losing its original meaning) Cf. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 181.

from the apostles had 'provoked' an intent looking on the part of the apostles who somehow notice that there was probably something more to experience from the lame man's request.

The addition '*with John*', always tends to obstruct the flow and clarity of the ongoing narration and Johnson sees the author struggling to "make the apostolic action communal."⁶⁷

Perhaps the most striking phrase of this verse is the authoritative request to *look at us*; a decisive intention to begin an encounter of faith and witness. Some commentators take it for granted that it is was Peter who said *look at us* since he is the primary subject of the preceding sentence. It is also most unlikely that both disciples would have said *look at us* at the same time. Nevertheless, the continuation of the monologue would be carried on more clearly by Peter, with 'Peter said' in v.6. This helps to reduce the doubt that it was Peter, traditionally understood as the *spokesman* who again has taken up the initiative.

v. 5 *And he fixed his attention upon them, expecting to receive something from them.*

The suspense is climbing even higher. The listener to the proclamation of this passage for the first time would be left wondering about what happened next. Did he

⁶⁷ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 64. Haenchen together with others like Fitzmyer, all agree with the hypothesis that the addition of '*with John*' was inserted in a later (Lukan) edition of the original story. Cf. Fitzmyer, *Acts of the Apostles*, 278. Haenchen stresses the impossibility of the beggar to "look fixedly in this way at two men at once. One must suppose that the original story spoke of only *one* miracle-worker" (Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 199. See also Dillon, in. *Acts*, NJBC, 735 and Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 26. It must however be acknowledged that the addition of a 'witness' which would be later useful in 4:19-20 (appearance before the Sanhedrin) does not in any way change the meaning of the event being described. It is simply an addition that can be done without if one takes the story out of context. Like many other passages in scripture, scholarly insights and contributions still remain aids and tools, but do not warrant the addition to, or subtraction from *canonical* texts.

receive something from them? What was it? The state of expectation of the lame beggar is heightened. Up till this point, one would not be out of place to imagine that the beggar was merely expecting to receive alms from these men passing by on their way to the temple. Haenchen notes that the beggars usually “call down God’s blessing on those who give them alms and this beggar could be responding to the formal invitation to ‘*look at us*’ with an anticipation of a blessing to say after he had received ‘*something*’.”⁶⁸ The Greek word ἐπέλεχεν (*to focus one’s eyes upon, to pay heed, to give one’s attention*) serves as a tool for a “vivid narration.”⁶⁹ The artistic quality of Luke is once more displayed creatively as elsewhere in the Gospel of Luke.⁷⁰ The reason for his *looking* is given by the use of προσδοκῶν (expecting). “The circumstantial participle *prosodokōn* is treated as explanatory. Luke creates a moment of suspense by this passing reference to the beggar’s expectation.”⁷¹

v. 6 *But Peter said, “I have no silver and gold, but I give you what I have; in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk”.*

This is the key sentence of the entire narrative. The concepts of ‘power’ and ‘name’ are parallel, “hence Peter’s invocation of Jesus’ name gains him empowerment by the Lord to work the cure”.⁷² Dillon clarifies the difference between the understanding of the ‘name’ as a *magical formula* and a “medium of the heavenly

⁶⁸ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

⁶⁹ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 199.

⁷⁰ Cf. Luke 5:12-15, 18-26, 8:4-15, 40-56, 15: 3-16:13, 19-31, etc.

⁷¹ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 65.

⁷² Dillon, *Acts*, NJBC, 735. (Cf. Acts 4:7, Luke 9:49-50, 10:17).

Christ's direct action, granted only upon confession of the faith in him (Cf. 4:10; 3:16).⁷³

Peter speaks alone and this time John is not added. Moreover, "Luke does not make Peter speak in the plural (nor does the act of healing itself have a plural subject)"⁷⁴

Peter "does not beg the exalted Jesus for healing, but releases the very power of healing through the utterance of the name of Jesus Christ".⁷⁵ In fact, the beginning

of this verse introduces a reversal (εἶπεν δὲ Πέτρος ...*but Peter said*): contrary to what was expected, Peter does something else. The preceding background is that

Peter still has his gaze *fixed* on this man while he was uttering the words. The deliberate use of the negation, of what Peter was not having, has aroused some

creative thinking among many a scholar. Generally, "silver and gold will refer to minted metal, i.e. money."⁷⁶ Why did he tell the beggar did not have silver and gold?

Barrett explains that Luke wants to present the apostles as *poor men* (Cf. Acts 2:44f, 4:32, 34f), but also ones who "had it in their power to give a better gift than

money"⁷⁷ Many commentators symbolically associate the use of *silver and gold* here

⁷³ Dillon Acts, in NJBC, 735. "The use of the 'the name' in religious formulas and practice springs from the identification of a name with the person to whom the name belongs and the belief that the qualities and powers of that person are inherent in his 'name', so that by invoking the 'name' his power and authority are called into operation" (Buttrick, et al. eds., The Acts of the Apostles, 55). Cf. Mark 9:38ff, Matt 7:22, Luke 10:17, Phil 2:9-11, 1 Cor 6:1, Acts 2:38, 3:16, 4:12, 5:41, 9:14, 16:18, 19:13. Haenchen sees the invocation of a 'name' as being 'part and parcel of the technique in accounts of healing miracles' in ancient thought (Haenchen, 200). And Barrett adds that Acts 3 and 19 are both among "Luke's great anti-magical passages" trying to combat the wrong magical understanding of some early Christians about miracles (Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 182).

⁷⁴ Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 199.

⁷⁵ Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 200.

⁷⁶ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 182.

⁷⁷ Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 182. The argument that Peter kept the money of the community with him (Cf. Acts 4:35) and so is expected to be having money seems out of place here. (Cf. Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, 26). This is rather obvious from the fact that the expression of lack of *silver and gold* does not necessarily imply an empty pocket (especially if offerings are sometimes made when people go to the temple to pray). The contrast between *silver and gold* and some inward quality of virtue (as in Luke 16:10-13) is commonplace in Hellenistic moral teaching and for the incommensurability of the divine power and human currency. Compare Acts 8:18-24. (Cf. Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 65).

by Peter with the “*silver and gold* used in constructing the gates of the temple.”⁷⁸

One can see an attempt to solve the *puzzle* of the *beautiful gate*.

Peter began his chat with the beggar by the use of an imperative: the invitation to *look at us*. But having fixed his attention on them with expectation, the beggar must have been put off with Peter saying he had neither silver nor gold. Here again, Luke seems to be hinting at what the lame beggar had been expecting when he fixed his gaze on them. But the following words (*but I give you what I have*) could have begun to raise up a drooping spirit. What had Peter to give? Taking ὑπάρχω in its full sense, Bruce interprets it as not having anything in store: “I do not possess”⁷⁹, which sounds more like an empty pocket. Peter had something to give; what Haenchen describes as “the plenary power to heal in the name of Jesus.”⁸⁰ The use of the *name* (τὸ ὄνομα) symbolizes an effective representation of Jesus in Acts. (Cf. 3:12-26 and in chapters 4 and 5).⁸¹ So what Peter had was the *presence* of Jesus. He was convinced of that presence in that particular situation and called on the *name*. The invocation of the name of Jesus has two adjectives: Christ (χριστοῦ) and the Nazarene (τοῦ ναζωραίου)⁸², “Luke’s use of Nazōraios seems to reflect a religious

lack of *silver and gold* does not necessarily imply an empty pocket (especially if offerings are sometimes made when people go to the temple to pray). The contrast between *silver and gold* and some inward quality of virtue (as in Luke 16:10-13) is commonplace in Hellenistic moral teaching and for the incommensurability of the divine power and human currency. Compare Acts 8:18-24. (Cf. Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 65).

⁷⁸ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 278.

⁷⁹ Bruce, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 105.

⁸⁰ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 200.

⁸¹ Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles*, 26.

⁸² There are two possible meanings of the usage of the word *Nazarene*: (1), A person from Nazareth and (2), a member of a religious group whose name may have other connotation especially from the Jewish Historical-Spirituality view point. However, in relation to Christ, some allusions are made to Judg 13, and a *fulfillment formula* of Matt 2:23. All the gospels attest to Jesus’ geographical proximity with this village (Matt 2:23, 21:11, John 1:45-46, Mark 1:9, Luke 2:39, 51, 4:16f). Cf. David Noel Freedman et al (eds.) *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, (NY: Doubleday Dell Pub. Group, Inc., 1992), 1049. The use of the word Christ outside LXX, NT and early Jewish and Christian writings, was as an adjective meaning ‘rubbed on’ or ‘used as ointment or salve’ (Lev. 21:10, 12 LXX) LXX used this adjective in connection with a person and as a translation of the Hebrew Māšīaah as

as well as a geographical background”⁸³ since it could be referring to a locality as well as a religious movement; most scholars however hold on to the earlier. The addition of *the Nazarene* could also be seen as a deliberate Lukan definition of Jesus’ identity.⁸⁴ However, Barrett is firm on his conclusion that, in this context, it simply implies the geographical origin of Jesus even though it is “undoubtedly true that in other contexts, *ναζωραῖος* may mean something other than this”.⁸⁵ There is less doubt about the usage of Christ here since it is generally accepted to be the title used for Jesus (*the Christ*) especially after the resurrection experience and the Pentecost witness.

Peter’s command to ‘walk’ (with textual variants like ‘rise up and walk’) is the most vivid word in the entire story. The confidence in this imperative statement helps to clarify the quality of the intent gazing and personalised dialogue that preceded it. The power of this command is purely in the pronouncement of the word (physical contact would follow only later). By saying *περιπάτε* (walk), Peter is already sure that the invocation of the name of Jesus would heal the lame beggar. Here, one discovers what Peter had to give which was neither *silver nor gold*. In the broad sense he gave the man the power of the risen Lord. In the narrow sense, he gave him his walking capacities. It sounds like an offering that the apostles had to offer. This offering (gift) is given in the name of Jesus. The power⁸⁶ by which Jesus had healed

‘anointed’. In the NT, ‘*the Christ*’ has a background of one who was to come (promised and expected) ‘*the anointed one*’. There are 350 unambiguous usage of *Christ* in the NT and some more which are ambiguous due to variants in sources. (Cf. Freedman et al (eds.) *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 4, (NY: Doubleday Dell Pub. Group, Inc., 1992.) 914.

⁸³ Johnson, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 66. Cf. Luke 1:26, 39, 51, 4:16, 18:37, Acts 2:22, 4:10, 6:14, 10:28, 22:8, 26:9.

⁸⁴ Haenchen, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 200. Comparing it with Acts 3:16, 4:10 (Cf. Matt 10:9)

⁸⁵ Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, 183.

⁸⁶ ‘Name’ and ‘Power’ are parallel concepts (4:7), hence Peter’s invocation of Jesus’ name empowers him by the Lord to work the cure (Cf. Mark 9:38-39, Luke 49-50, 10:17). It is very important to note that the name is not a magical formula to put Jesus under human control! As it is used in this context,

a paralytic is shown to be still operative in the healing of this lame man.⁸⁷ This is evident in the echo of the word περιπάτει, which may call to mind the formulae used by Jesus in the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1-12⁸⁸

v. 7 *And he took him by the right hand and raised him up; and immediately his feet and ankles were made strong.*

The pronouncement of Peter (in v.6) is followed by an action or gesture in this verse. The usage of ἤγειρεν αὐτόν (*he raised him*) clarifies that the one who did the healing was Peter since his name is already mentioned in verse 6 (εἶπεν δὲ πέτρος, *but Peter said...*).

Before taking him by the right hand, it is possible that the miracle had already taken place. Since the lame beggar had been in that state 'from the womb of his mother', he would need to be assisted to rise to his feet.⁸⁹ The realization of the miracle was when the man was raised up because at his rising, the expression '*immediately his feet and ankles were made strong*' follows.⁹⁰ There is a clear possibility to picture a

it is the medium of the direct action of Christ "granted only upon confession of faith in him (Cf. 4:10, 3:16)." Dillon Act, in NJBC, 735.

⁸⁷ Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 105. Cf. Mark 2:9.

⁸⁸ "I say to you, stand up and take your mat and go to your home" Mark 2:11

⁸⁹ The use of physical contacts in biblical miracles stories is frequent and some interpreters see this gesture of πιάσας (touch, seizing, take hold, grasp...) as the "channel through which the miraculous powers of the healer stream forth over the sick man." Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 200. Citing Otto Bauernfeind, Die Apostelgeschichte Theologischer Handkommentar Zum Neuen Testament, vol. 5, (Leipzig: 1939), 60. The action πιάσειν is found 8 times in Johanne literature and only twice in Acts. (here and in 12:4) Cf. Acts 9:17, 41, 28:8, Luke 5:27, Mark 5:27, Acts 5:15, 19:12. This style of physical contact "would inevitably add some weight to the magical interpretation of the event" (Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 183) which could be misleading, since the sign came after the *words* and both are part of the miracle.

⁹⁰ The usage of the word '*right hand*' in this context does not seem to have any symbolic connection with the biblical theological understanding of the *right hand of the Father*, or the *right hand of God* (Acts 7:55) mentioned at the death of Stephen (such interpretations are not uncommon in patristic writings). Fitzmyer suggests that it is the right hand of the lame man, which "had been stretched out in expectation of the required alms" (Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, 279). The same explanation

lame man being *raised up*. This is an effort by Peter to make manifest what he had commanded (*walk*).⁹¹

The use of ‘immediately’ (παραχρῆμα) is typically Lukan.⁹² The immediacy of healings in miracle stories helps to intensify the uniqueness of the act. Here, we find the key word that introduces the confirmation of the two actions of Peter (invoking the *name* and raising the man).

It is interesting to note however, that Luke does not separate the invocation of the name of Jesus from the raising up (of the lame beggar) before going on to explain what happened *immediately* (there and then). The lame man’s ankles and feet were made strong after the invocation and the raising. At least from the flow of the narration, one can maintain that both the word and the action of Peter are combined in the working of this miracle.

This verse “is a favourite passage with those who seek to prove from his technical language that the author of Acts was a medical man”⁹³ because of the descriptive usage of the words βάσεις (feet) and σφυδρά (ankle-bones). They wonder why the author should be so precise in this regard. Haenchen differs however in his understanding. In non biblical Greek, βάσεις is not a medical *terminus technicus*

⁹¹ The addition of *rise up* by some manuscripts helps to vivify this imagery. But for a spiritual and pastoral reading and interpretation the idea of Johnson who sees an allusion to the resurrection of Jesus may be edifying: “the power that comes from the prophet whom God ‘raised up’ is ‘raising up’ this man” (Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 66).

⁹² Cf. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 183. In Luke 10 times, Acts, 6 times, and the rest of the NT 2 times. The difference between the Markean εὐθὺς (immediately) and Lukan παραχρῆμα (immediately) is not clear. It could simply be another linguistic case of two words meaning the same thing. However, in usage, it appears that εὐθὺς has a sense of direction: *straight, direct...* and παραχρῆμα has a slant towards a location: *on the spot, forthwith, there and then...* (Cf. Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1968), 717 and 1331.

⁹³ Buttrick, et al. The Acts of The Apostles, 55.

since the word originally meant 'step' or 'pace' and later 'feet',⁹⁴ the same applies to σφυδρον (ankles), which is medical, but not exclusively so.⁹⁵

On the other hand, Bruce and some other commentators have discovered evidence to support the debatable idea that these words can be categorized as those considered as medical *terminus technicus*: "that which the physician observes during the months of ordinary *gradual* cure of a lame man is here compressed into a moment"⁹⁶ with the expression *immediately his feet and ankles were made strong (or firm)*.

The words employed to describe the seat of the lameness tend to show that the writer was acquainted with medical phraseology, and had investigated the nature of the disease under which the men suffered.⁹⁷

While the debate of interpreters here is more concerned with the identification of the occupational background of the author of Acts, we need not doubt the medical nature of the miracle *per se*. The nature of the miracle is distinguishable from the occupation of its narrator or writer.⁹⁸

After the detailed description, Luke ends this part of the working of the miracle by what could be understood as a working by God. In fact, the next verse will pick up this meaning and describe the man as '*praising God*' whom the reader would then

⁹⁴ Cf. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 200.

⁹⁵ Cf. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 200. This extra biblical criticism does not necessarily summarize the Lukan understanding of the usage of these words. It only helps to have a critical view of the varied opinions of commentators.

⁹⁶ Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 105.

⁹⁷ Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 105. Bruce also suggests that the combination of βάσεις and σφυδρά may imply "medical finesse" (Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles, 105). βάσεις has a partly poetic background in Wis 13:18, Josephus *Ant.* 7.303, Plato *Timaeus* 92a (Cf. Bruce, The Acts of the Apostles 105).

⁹⁸ That is why though σφυδρά and βάσεις fall into the category of *medicus terminus* used by doctors, it would be worthwhile to keep in mind that in the context of the writing of Acts we are dealing with a narrator of sacred story and not a medical doctor or physician. (Cf. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 184). That is why the last part of this verse makes things a little clearer: *his feet and ankles were*

clearly identify as the actual 'worker' of the miracle when Peter would begin his teaching based on this event in verse 11.

v. 8 *And leaping up he stood and walked and entered the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God.*

The healing has been performed. What now follows is the reaction of the healed one. The cure is certainly complete. The lame man who is more than forty years old (4:22) does not only have his feet and bones physically strengthened, but has also learned the art of walking! Perhaps that is why the description of his being *born* lame and being *carried* daily were presented so vividly in the early verses of this chapter. The medical nature of this miracle probably lies more in the brain of this man than his feet and ankles since he was able walk after forty years of never having walked.

The usage of seven verbs (leap, stand, walk, enter, walk, leap, praise) in what Fitzmyer describes as "clumsy Greek"⁹⁹ emphatically describes the completeness of the healing. The obvious repetition of the use of synonymous words could only be for the sake of clarity¹⁰⁰ and intensification of the wonder. However to consider it overloaded may be an overstatement. One following the details of the story can almost picture the man behaving exactly as has been graphically described. He sprang up (leapt) and stood, then he walked, following the disciples, he entered the temple and began again walking and leaping as if in alternation and while doing all

made strong. Fitzmyer suggests a possibility of seeing this as a "theological passive": they *were made strong* "by God". Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 279.

⁹⁹ Fitzmyer, *The Acts of the Apostles*, 279.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical*, 184.

this, he was praising God. This series of unusual gesture aroused attention in verse 11.¹⁰¹

The praise of the healed man was directed towards God even though he followed the two disciples into the temple. “The use of ‘praise’ (aineō) here echoes the description of the community in 2:47: the goal of healing is restoration to a people that praises God.¹⁰² The man once lame has now changed his occupation at the temple “from begging to praising God’.¹⁰³

vv. 9-10. *And the people saw him walking and praising God and recognized him as the one who sat for alms at the beautiful gate of the temple (10) and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what happened to him.*

These last two verses of the pericope shift focus to the onlookers. It returns to the *people* (in v. 2) who were described as bringing the lame beggar daily to the temple.

The reaction of the crowd is typical of miracle stories (Cf. Luke 4:36, 5:9, 26, 7:16, 8:37, 56, 11:14, 13:17, 18:43); they “acknowledge in amazement the reality of the miracle which is thereby beyond all doubt”.¹⁰⁴ The use of θάμβος (astonishment, also in 4:36, 5:9) calls to mind the “awe felt in the presence of divine activity”.¹⁰⁵ Since the cure was seen by *all the people*,¹⁰⁶ it may be presumed that this healing was

¹⁰¹ On the other hand, if one considers it a “clumsy sentence” (Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 184. Referring to the Greek usage), it is perhaps best to leave the sentence as “one of a number of indications that Acts did not receive a final stylistic revision.” (Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 184).

¹⁰² Johnson, The Acts of the Apostles, 66.

¹⁰³ Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, 279.

¹⁰⁴ Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 200.

¹⁰⁵ Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles, 200

¹⁰⁶ *All the people* sometimes imply only the Jewish people. “here Luke means no more than, that among the (very largely, but not necessarily or exclusively) Jewish inhabitants of the Jerusalem crowd, the event was widely known”. Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 185

widely known by many at the time it was written. Somehow, Luke is already setting the stage for the speech of Peter. The crowd has already been introduced. Later on the components of this crowd would be defined (4:1).¹⁰⁷

1.7 Historical Setting

The historical setting of this event is suggested to be during the first ten years after the crucifixion of Jesus.¹⁰⁸ It is not clear how far this episode is connected with the early Christian expectation of the *parousia*. But Lüdemann is of the opinion that a delay of the *parousia* may have influenced Luke to emphasize the presence of the risen Lord in those who believe in him. As a miracle story per se, Lüdemann also suggests that “there is no historical nucleus to the tradition of the miracle story in vv.1-10.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ Fitzmyer describes *all the people* as another usage of the Lukan hyperbole (Cf. 2:44) (Cf. Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, 279. See also Barrett, A Critical and Exegetical, 185. One of the points being stressed here is that “the miracle has its effect not only on the beggar but also on the inhabitants of the city who came to worship God in his temple.” (Fitzmyer, The Acts of the Apostles, 279). ἐκστάσεως (amazement, bewilderment, Luke 2:47, 5:26, 8:56, 24:22, Acts 8:9, 11, 13, 9:21, 10:45, 12:16) brings the original narrative to a close by reporting the effect upon the observers (Cf. Conzelmann, Acts of the Apostles, 26).

¹⁰⁸ Gerd Lüdemann, Early Christianity according to the Tradition of Acts, (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1989), 54. Lüdemann, suggests that Luke is trying to present Peter as the new leader of the community of Jerusalem.¹⁰⁹ Lüdemann, Early Christianity, 54-55. The argument here is that many commentators suggest that miracles often have different setting and are used by biblical authors to emphasize a point or give a teaching. In this case it would be difficult to be sure the exact historical situation of particular miracles.

1.8 Theology of the Author

The universal approach of Luke in his work (Luke-Acts) includes both the welcoming of Jews and Gentiles into the kingdom of God and also, the freedom of Jesus to send the promised Holy Spirit to everyone. In *The Theology of St. Luke*,¹¹⁰ Conzelmann makes two very clear divisions: 'Redemptive History' and 'Eschatological Salvation'. This miracle falls into the later category. The outpouring of the Spirit is the beginning of the "period of the Church".¹¹¹ What Luke is probably telling the reader in this pericope is that there are clear signs of the dawn of a new reality which itself, is a means to spread it; i.e. the workings of the Holy Spirit is a tool for preaching the message of salvation which Jesus has accomplished.

1.9 Conclusion

The healing of a physically deformed man became an opportunity of expanding the kerygmatic teachings of the apostles. The underlying characteristics of this Lukan account are two. The first is a description of the illness that was cured and the second is an insight into the purpose for which it was done. The Spirit of Jesus is working through those who 'call upon his name'. How is this same kind of phenomenon experienced in the Church today? One answer to this question is found when one studies how miracles are verified for the canonization of saints.

¹¹⁰ Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961).

¹¹¹ Conzelmann, *The Theology of St. Luke*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1961), 95. 'Redemptive History' refers to the salvific act of Christ and its consequences, while 'Eschatological Salvation' refers to the new age of the Church, characterized by the action of the Holy Spirit leading believers to the second coming. See also Fitzmyer, *Luke the Theologian: Aspects of his teaching*, (NY: Paulist Press, 1989), 117f.

CHAPTER TWO

MEDICAL MIRACLES ATTRIBUTED TO SAINTS

2.1 Introduction

Miracles are still important in Christian spirituality since they are temporary signs of an eschatological reality. In the process of canonization, miracles play a vital and definitive role. But before a miracle can be declared as 'official', it has to undergo a verification process. The process of verification of miracles involves some similarities with the account of Acts 3:1-10. The reasons why miracles are prerequisites for canonization, their characteristics and the medical nature of some of them are presented in this chapter.

2.2 Why miracles are prerequisites for canonization

The historical background of the process of the canonization of saints reveals that after more than five centuries of *popular proclamation of saints* by the early Christians¹¹², a new era of Episcopal canonization began between the 6th and 10th centuries. "The faithful were often satisfied with the reputation of a holy life or with a great spirit of charity, and most of all with the fame of miracles."¹¹³ Although the first recorded papal canonization dates back to 973,¹¹⁴ it was only under pope

¹¹² Mainly made up of martyrs, confessors, doctors, bishops and missionary monks

¹¹³ Molinari, "Canonization of Saints (History and Procedure)", in William J. McDonald, et al. New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1961), 55.

¹¹⁴ Molinari, "Canonization of Saints (History and Procedure)", 56. The Canonization of St. Udalricus.

Gregory IX (1234) that a definite structure, procedure and canonical process were formulated to be strictly used in the certification of the authenticity of the life and miracles attributed to a case for canonization. The first case to strictly undergo this process was that of St. Anthony of Padua. Pope Gregory IX established the principle that “neither virtues without miracles nor miracles without virtues provide sufficient grounds for canonization. And the church was going to be the judge of both.”¹¹⁵ The requirement of miracles for canonization today is not for the sake of mere Catholic *pietism* as was the case during the Carolingian and Merovingian periods (415-928) “when everyone, clerics as well as the ordinary faithful, was notoriously avid for miracle stories, and very credulous that the church began to emphasize the miraculous.”¹¹⁶ Over the years, the development of the formal procedure has reached a stage whereby “the reliance on proven miracles comes to be a part of the saint-making process.”¹¹⁷

The historical factors mentioned above are not the only reasons why today, miracles have become one of the essential components of the saint making process. From a systematic point of view, the Christ-event launched the beginning of *the new creation* that is fundamentally eschatological. This implies that we have an *overflow* of what is traditionally expected to come only at the end already present in our time. This theological concept of the *spill*¹¹⁸ is vital in understanding the role miracles play in ascertaining the influence of the divine in the life and intercession of a

¹¹⁵ Kenneth L. Woodward, Making Saints: How The Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who doesn't, And Why, (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 214.

¹¹⁶ Kenneth L. Woodward, Making Saints, 215.

¹¹⁷ Kenneth L. Woodward, Making Saints, 214.

¹¹⁸ Modern approach to eschatology shifts drastically from discussing the last things (*ta escata*) to a person (his incarnation, continuous presence, and final coming-with all the consequences that these entails) (*ton escaton*). Cf. J. Moltmann, Theology of Hope, (NY: Harper and Row Pub., 1967).

member of the body of Christ who now lives in a different dimension, the eschatological reality already accomplished by Christ and gradually leading to completion on the ontological sphere. Wolfhart Pannenberg describes it as a *prolepsis*, an anticipation of the *new* (already present) in the *old*. Similar themes are developed in some of the works of Raymond E Brown and Joachim Jeremias.¹¹⁹

“With the rising of the crucified Christ from the dead, the future of the new creation of all things has already begun in the midst of this dying transitory world.”¹²⁰

These theological conclusions are heavily based on biblical theology. Among the signs of and evidence for the presence of the eschatological reality, the OT presents an understanding of the miraculous, things beyond human power and understanding, as landmarks showing the presence of the *new creation*.¹²¹ This understanding of the coming of the kingdom is further affirmed in the NT when Jesus gave a reply to the inquiry of John the Baptist about the one who was to come.¹²²

With the mystery of the incarnation¹²³ and the overspill of the future now mingling as it were, with the present, miracles are possibilities and they are signs of the kingdom already present among us and *soon* to be fully realized as the only mode of

¹¹⁹ The theology of Miracles falls in the category of the signs of the Kingdom. The theme of the Kingdom has been extensively studied by many a scholar and Pannenberg describes it as a *prolepsis*. It involves that the belief the fruits of the mystery of redemption can be seen in contemporary experience as indicators of a final conquest of good over evil of every kind. The theme of a *realized eschatology* is also developed in: Joachim Jeremias *The Parables of the Jesus*, (London: S C M Press, 1954) and R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, vol. I, (NY: Doubleday and Company, 1966).

¹²⁰ J. Moltmann, *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*, (London: S C M Press, 1996), 136.

¹²¹ Cf. Isa 29:18-19, 35:5-6, 61:1. “on that day, the deaf shall hear,... the eyes of the blind shall see...”

¹²² Cf. Luke 7:18-23, Matt 11:2-6. OT eschatology moves in stages from Patriarchal *Promise of Land and Progeny* (Gen 12) to Monarchical establishment of Peace, fertility and righteousness (2 Sam 7f) It slowly changed to the *Day of the Lord* (Isa 2, Amos 5) opening up to all nations – conquest and later, Joy. The kingdom of God where Yahweh will be the shepherd of the people (Ezek 34). These were followed by two personalized concepts of the *coming of the Messiah* (Isa 11) and the *Holy Spirit* (Jer 31, Ezek 36), shifting from external to individual sanctification (new heart and new spirit). See D. L. Petersen, “Eschatology: Old Testament”, Freedman, et al., *Anchor Bible*, vol. 2, 575f.

¹²³ In the broad sense (life, death, resurrection and the coming of the Holy Spirit).

existence at the end of time. The communal understanding of the *body of Christ* reveals a constant interaction between the living and the 'dead' members of this body. The miracles of Jesus, the apostles and saints remain signs of this communion. It is on this foundation that one can say that miracles are signs of the eschatological event begun by Christ.

Therefore, the present emphasis on the miraculous in the determination process of canonizing saints can remain as a proof of divine intervention in our present situation. The fact that miracles of a medical nature are mainly and almost only those preferred for the causes canonization is circumstantial and will be discussed in the next point.

2.3 Characteristics of Medical Miracles

How may one define a miracle? The definition given by Fisher is rather helpful. He defined it as "an event which the forces of nature –including the natural powers of man –cannot of themselves produce, and which must, therefore be referred to a supernatural agency."¹²⁴ This supernatural intervention is not coming as a contradiction or destruction of *nature*. Instead, miracles "build on nature and provide it with a complementary and higher perfection."¹²⁵

The understanding of medical miracles in the theological sphere is slightly different from the way it is understood in the purely medical circus. For example medical miracles certified for the canonization of saints are mostly of a physical nature with

¹²⁴ <http://www.Christiancourier.com/archives/miracles.htm> (1), citing George Fisher, *Manual of Christian Evidences*, (NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 9.

¹²⁵ T. G. Pater, "Miracle (Theology of)" in McDonald, et al. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol., 9, 892.

emphasis on the human body (empirical). In fact, "right now, about 99 percent of the signs requested concern miracles of a medical nature".¹²⁶ Theologians define them as miracles but doctors and other scientists define them as beyond *natural explanation*. A celebrated neurosurgeon, Ben Carson believes that God can make use of the doctor in a way the doctor soon realizes is beyond ordinary human intervention, in the curing of diseases.¹²⁷ One of the differences is that theologians tend to see how the one on whom the miracle had occurred had contributed to the sign, while doctors on the other hand would be more interested in where modern medicine had *failed* or on how human skills were limited.

For a miracle to be defined as medical, it has to be examined by the *Consulta Medica*, which is a panel of five physicians representing all major medical specialties including surgery and tropical diseases.¹²⁸

Generally, in the procedure used by the *Consulta Medica*, four major characteristics can be identified.

1. Biological illnesses or deformities
2. Diagnosed by human (medical) knowledge as incurable or protracted
3. A cure made with a method completely new to the available materials and development of contemporary expertise.
4. Should be at least noticeable or verifiable after the change has taken place (even if inexplicable).

¹²⁶ Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints*, 209.

¹²⁷ In his most highly proclaimed book *Gifted Hands*, Carson concludes that there is the influence of the *extraordinary* in the many complicated surgical interventions he had made in his career. (Cf. Ben Carson, *Gifted Hands*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990).

¹²⁸ Cf. Woodward, *Making Saints*, 194. As a rule, the names of these medical consultants are not made public. Their selection is based on medical competence and their personal religious outlook and practice is not counted. As at 1990, all of them were Italians and males.

2.4 Why preference of medical miracles over other types of miracles?

Miracles can be understood as a sign of the eschatological dimension of Christianity which is fundamentally Christological and ecclesiological.¹²⁹ In the Gospels and The Acts of the Apostles, miracles are not presented as ends in themselves, but only a means (among others) to show that the *kingdom of God* has indeed come. A summary of the classification of NT miracles, by John Wilkinson, is presented below.¹³⁰

- a. Nature Miracles: temporary suspension of ordinarily accepted laws of nature (e.g. Matt 8:23-27, calming the storm and John 6:16-21, walking on the water).
- b. Human (physical) Body: involving biological illnesses or diseases (e.g. blind to see, John 9:1-7, and lame to walk, Acts 3:1-10).
- c. Divine power over death: resuscitation of Lazarus (John 11:43-44) and the only son of a widow to life, (Luke 7:11-17; Acts 20:7-12).¹³¹
- d. Expulsion of demons: e.g. Matt 12:22f.¹³²
- e. Control of Material things: turning water to wine (John 2:1-11), multiplication of loaves and fish (John 6:1-14).

¹²⁹ Modern understanding of Eschatology focuses more on the role of Christ and his events in the bringing about of the 'fullness of time'.

¹³⁰ This summary is taken from a reorganization of: John Wilkinson, The Bible and Healing: A Medical and Theological Commentary, (Edinburgh: The Handsel Press Ltd., 1998).

¹³¹ The resurrection of Jesus also falls somehow into this category and the witness to the resurrection of Jesus became the foundation of Christianity (1 Cor 15:16-19).

¹³² Often confused with illnesses related to nervous breakdown and other kinds of mental intricacies, which remained obscure to the primitive mind. Unknown spiritual powers (including the one of

- f. Plant and Animal kingdom altered: e.g. Fig tree (Matt 21:19, unusual catch of fish, extraction of money from a fish to pay tax (Matt 17:24-27).
- g. Moral conversion and dramatic change of lifestyle: e.g. conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-22), the encounter with Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10).¹³³

Wilkinson develops a very elaborate and systematic analysis of the medical nature of healings in the Bible. From an empirical point of view, it appears that of all the forms of miracles, only those of medical nature can be analyzed and verified. This factor is largely the reason why miracles of a medical nature dominate all the cases of miracles that are verified for the canonization of saints. However, there are different types of medical miracles in the bible and Wilkinson also notes the variance in methods and motives for them.

It should be admitted that “in most cases the diagnosis cannot be more than a general or synoptic one, but in a few cases sufficient significant detail is given to allow a more specific diagnosis to be made”.¹³⁴ Based on this assumption, he gives the following classification of disabilities and diseases of the miracles or *signs* worked by Jesus.¹³⁵

1. Physical diseases

a. Acute diseases

*Fever (John 4:52, Matt 8:4, mark 1:30, Luke 4:38).

*Acute anterior poliomyelitis (Matt 8:6, Luke 7:2)

Jesus) were all suspected. The point here is that people believed that there was the power of the evil one influencing people's lives and it took a miracle to exorcise it.

¹³³ Sometimes, these are simply categorized as *Nature miracles*, *Physical miracles*, *Exorcisms* and *Creation miracles*.

¹³⁴ Wilkinson, The Bible and Healing, 70

¹³⁵ Wilkinson, The Bible and Healing, 70-71, it is also noted that it is Luke who often mentions minor details.

*Incised wound (Luke 22:50)

*Unknown fatal disease (Luke 7:12, Matt 9:18, Mark 5:23, Luke 8:42, John 11:3, 13).

b. Chronic disease

*Paraplegia (paralysis of the lower limbs) Matt 9:2, Mark 2:3, Luke 5:18, John 5:5-7.

*Paralysis of the hand (Matt 12:10, Mark 3:1, Luke 6:6)

*Blindness (Matt 9:27, 20:30, Mark 8:22, 10:46, Luke 8:35-43)

*Deafness and defective speech (Mark 7:32)

*Rheumatic disease of the spine (*Spondylitis ankylopoietica*) (Luke 13:11)

*Chronic heart disease (Luke 14:2)

*Gynecological disease (*uterine fibroid tumors*) (Matt 9:20, Mark 5:25, Luke 8:43)

*Infectious skin disease (Luke 17:12, Matt 8:2, Mark 1:40, Luke 5:12)

2. Demonic possession ¹³⁶

a. With physical manifestation described

*Major epilepsy (Matt 17:15 Mark 1:26, 9:39, Luke 4:35, 9:39)

¹³⁶ The biblical usage of demon possession is often attributive. This means that it ascribes the cases of disorders (mainly mental or neurotic) to Satan. While modern psychology often disproves this attribution, it (modern psychology) does not deny the possibilities of the existence of the diseases per se. Cf. S.V. McCasland, By The Finger of God: Demon Possession and Exorcism in the Early Church in the Light of modern views of Mental Illness, (NY: Macmillan, 1951). This work is mainly against the belief in demon possession or its existence.

*Acute mania (Matt 8:28, Mark 5:2-7, Luke 8:29)

*Muteness (Matt 9:32-33)

*Muteness and Blindness (Matt 12:22, Luke 11:14)

b. Without specific physical manifestation described

*The Syrophenician girl (Matt 15:22, Mark 7:25)

The elaboration of these two broad classifications of physical diseases in the gospels also applies to the Acts of the Apostles.¹³⁷ The underlying factor here is the motive for healing. There are about 26 accounts of physical healing of individuals by Jesus in the gospels with considerable details. The ones given in Acts are much fewer.

¹³⁸But in both the gospels and Acts, the motives are similar. Some of the common ones are: expression of compassion, (e.g. Matt 9:41, Luke 7:13-14), response to a need and plea for mercy or help (e.g. Acts 3:2), response to faith (e.g. Luke 7:9), manifestation of glory (John 9:3), fulfillment of scripture (Matt 8:16-17), witness to the gospel (Acts 8:5-7), by 'provocation' (Acts 16:18)¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Some examples noted by Wilkinson in Acts include: Acute blindness (9:8), Head injury (20:9), Acute bacillary dysentery (28:8), Lameness (3: 1f), Cripple (14:8f), Neurological disorder (9:33), Paralyzed and Lameness (8:7), Demon possession (8:7, 16:16).

¹³⁸ There are also 12 references to occasions when Jesus healed people in *groups*. In Acts, the same kind of healing done by the one man Jesus is performed by various Apostles at different times and places. There are about 5 instances of the healing of individuals (3:1f, 9:17-19, 32-35, 14:8-11, 28:8), one case of exorcism (16:16-18), two instances of raising from the dead (9:36-41, 20:9-12), and four instances of healing in *group* (5:15-16, 8:6-7, 19:11-12, 28:9). Others are classified as *general healing* (2:43, 5:12, 6:8, 14:3). Cf. Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing*, 66-68.

¹³⁹ Cf. Wilkinson, *The Bible and Healing*, 97, 169.

Another similar factor that helps to identify medical or physical healings is the *method* presented to be used in the working of the miracles. There are five methods¹⁴⁰ common to both the gospels and Acts.

1 by word

2 by touch

3 word and touch combined

4 at a distance

5 use of saliva

Though the use of *touch* is more common in the NT, we find some other instances in Acts like, healing by shadow (Acts 5:15), clothes from Paul's body (Acts 19:12), and embrace (Acts 20:9-12).

Today, most of the miracles for canonization fall into one or more of the categories already elaborated from the NT. All of these are medical in nature and, though there are other types of miracles mentioned in the NT, the overwhelming majority are those that affect human beings: their body, their faith, their families and ultimately, the community of believers- the Church. This is one of the reasons why these types of miracles are still preferred in the process of canonization.

In addition to the fact that most medical miracles are *deeply biblical, person-centred* and are *verifiable*, a fourth reason why there is the preference of miracles of a

¹⁴⁰ Wilkinson adds a sixth method he called 'Excision'. Since Jesus never really practised this method, it cannot be said to be common to both the Gospels and Acts. The idea is from Matt (ref. 5:29-30), Jesus never practised the method and exegetically, it can be interpreted as being merely metaphorical. However, while surgeons do use this method in curing different kinds of diseases today, the idea was wrongly interpreted by Origen of Alexandria, who castrated himself, to curb sexual temptations. The Council of Nicea prohibited self-mutilation of this kind in AD 325. Cf. Wilkinson, The Bible And Healing, 120, citing Jean Danielou, Origen, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 13.

medical nature is related to a concept that C. F. D. Moule calls an "authenticity test"¹⁴¹: miracles that show the presence of God in human beings. By the examination of these miracles one may discover a certain constant working of God in the events surrounding the healing. Miracles of this nature often reveal the element of the supernatural working in ordinary human beings and even if the cure is temporal, it nevertheless goes to show, as if in a flash, the holistic well-being that Christ has already *accomplished*, and which will prevail in the end.¹⁴²

However, from a purely systematic point of view, miracles are *defined*. It is not just enough for them to have happened. Their definition or declaration by the Magisterium flows necessarily from a series of investigation, analysis and verification. Consequently, the type of miracles that can meet the demands of the present scientific method of verification are not those that are purely *moral*, primarily *subjective* (inner feeling of conviction or conversion), *natural* (manipulation of material elements, magic sorcery and ecological variation) or *overwhelmingly spiritual* (inexplicable visions, prophecies, speaking in tongues, spiritual insights and certain forms of foreknowledge beyond the natural commonsensical wisdom known to human beings). Rather they are those that are physical (medical, biological, scientific, observable, examinable and calculable), even if they ultimately remain thoroughly inexplicable by human means and technology.

¹⁴¹ C. F. D. Moule, *Miracles*, (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co. Ltd. 1965), 243, in an excursus on the classification of miracle stories.

¹⁴² This refers to the biblical spiritual understanding of 'no more sickness, no more pain'. When one suddenly recovers from a fatal illness in a way that is beyond ordinary means and competence, a 'leap of faith' is the only option for those who want to grasp the mystery behind such a phenomenon. It is as if one gets a 'preview' of the promise *already accomplished but not yet*.

Above all, miracles are considered divine signs from God which are verifiable by the church through the *mysterious* guidance of the Holy Spirit.¹⁴³

In practice today, virtually all accepted miracles for canonization are “medical cures”¹⁴⁴, and when these miracles are verified and *recognised* by the Church, they “are like a divine seal which confirms the sanctity of a servant of God whose intercession has been invoked, a sign of God who inspires and legitimises the cult being rendered [to the candidate], and gives a surety to the teaching which [the candidate’s] life, witness, and action embody.”¹⁴⁵

2.5 Methodology of scrutinising miracles in the Catholic Church

It is prudent to begin this section by admitting the fact that “To describe the whole question of miracles in causes of beatification and canonization as one which nowadays occasions uneasiness, doubt and perplexity, and indeed as a target for criticism, particularly among the uninformed, would be merely platitudinous”¹⁴⁶

However the aim here is not to criticize the process of proving miracles but to present it as it is. The methodology of scrutinizing falls under the general procedure for the causes of saints. Theologically speaking, there is a difference between *Formal* and *Equivalent* canonization processes.

¹⁴³ This concept of the presence of the Holy Spirit’s assistance in the Church dealings is perhaps one of the greatest acts of faith a believer needs to accept and then perceive the workings of the *Divine* in the *Ordinary*. It is the same principle the Church uses in explaining the doctrine of the *infallibility* of the Pope and the declaration of somebody as a saint.

¹⁴⁴ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 192

¹⁴⁵ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 192, citing John Paul II, “Miracles Are Messages and Signs of a God who is Love”, in *L’Osservatore Romano*, weekly edition, nos.51-52, Dec.19, 26, 1987.

¹⁴⁶ Paul Molinari, “Saints and Miracles, the miraculous in causes of Beatification and Canonization” in *The Way: contemporary Christian Spirituality* (London 1978, 287). Cf. Thomas Pazhayampallil, *A Commentary on the New code of Canon Law*, (Bangalore: K. J. C. Publication, 1985), 548-52.

An *Equivalent Process*¹⁴⁷ is the Pope's definitive decision to honour as a saint one who has been the object of a public cult for more than one hundred years even when a canonical process has not been introduced. In this case the heroic virtue, along with miracles worked during and after the life of the person need only to be historically credible, and not necessarily having any juridical proof. "Mere permission for a mass and office or insertion of the name in the Roman Martyrology is not *Equivalent canonization*".¹⁴⁸

The *formal juridical Process* of verifying miracles is the result of a system influenced by a historical development of the works of Popes like Gregory IX (1234), Sixtus V (*immense aeterni Dei* 1588), Urban VIII (1642),¹⁴⁹ Benedict XIV (*De Servorum Dei beatificatione et Beatorum canonizatione*), the departmentalisation of some Vatican offices (by Pius IX in 1914)¹⁵⁰ and the establishment of a section for historical causes (Pope Pius XI in 1930).¹⁵¹ Another vital influence was the 1917 code of Canon Law.¹⁵² Book 4 of this code (canons 1999-2141), contains the norms to be followed in the process of beatification and canonization.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Also called 'Equipollent' process, Cf. Molinari, 'Saints and Miracles', 288.

¹⁴⁸ A. E. Green, "Canonization of Saints" (Theological aspects) in McDonald, et al. New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, 61. "A *schema* which was drawn to evaluate this system was later withdrawn, probably in order to give greater discretion and freedom to the action of the Holy Father". (Cf. Molinari, 'Saints and Miracles', 288)

¹⁴⁹ Urbani VIII, *Pont. O.M. Decreta Servanda in canonizatione et beatificatione Sanctorum*: a collection of all past documents on the canonization of Saints).

¹⁵⁰ Splitting the *Congregation of rites* in two: Liturgical Section and Causes of Saints section.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Molinari, "Canonization of Saints" (History and Procedure) in McDonald, et al. New Catholic Encyclopedia, vol. 3, 56.

¹⁵² This code became effective on May 19, 1918).

¹⁵³ Cf. Molinari, "Canonization of Saints" (History and Procedure) 56. Also, see *Sacra Congregatio pro Causis sanctorum, Normae, 7 Feb. 1983* in "Communicationes" XV (1983) 161-168, cited in Thomas Pazhayampallil, A Commentary on the New code of Canon Law, (Bangalore: K. J. C. publication, 1985), 548-552.

Today, the *norms* regarding the procedure to be followed in the canonization of saints are contained in an Apostolic Constitution promulgated by Pope John Paul II on January 25 1983, called: *Divinus Perfectionis Magister*. An update of this document was reported by the Press Office of the Holy See, in 1997.¹⁵⁴

It is interesting to note that, “even when the severest investigation and discussions have brought the conclusion that a Servant of God practised all Christian virtues in a heroic manner, the Church prudently demands a confirmation in the form of miracles before proceeding to beatification”.¹⁵⁵ These miracles are seen as unequivocal proofs of the approval given by God. This is with an underlying principle that “God confirms with signs only what corresponds to truth and reality”.¹⁵⁶

The process of proving miracles is ‘rigorously juridical’ and the conclusion of “a miracle process must establish that (a) God truly performed a miracle—nearly always a physical healing—and (b) the miracle occurred through the intercession of the Servant of God”.¹⁵⁷

The *prelate theologian* (promoter of the faith) has the task of choosing the theological consultants for each cause and presiding at their meetings. This method began only in 1983 and it is a shift from emphasis on *law* to *history*, what Woodward calls “a striking paradigm shift”,¹⁵⁸ which saw the victory of the *historians* over the *lawyers*. “The announced goals of the reform were to make the canonization process simpler, faster, cheaper, more ‘collegial’ and ultimately more

¹⁵⁴ See the full text reported by Press Office in the appendix.

¹⁵⁵ Molinari, “Canonization of Saints” (History and Procedure), 58.

¹⁵⁶ Molinari, “Canonization of Saints” (History and Procedure), 58.

¹⁵⁷ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 84.

¹⁵⁸ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 91

productive.”¹⁵⁹ In this reform, the collection of evidences of miracles is left to the responsibility of the local Bishops of the diocese where they took place. In this reform, the lawyers’ role was practically diminished. The historians have to continue to investigate and confirm reports. This move saw the elimination of the *Devil’s Advocate* and the responsibility for demonstrating the truth about a candidate’s life and miracles is now being handled by a group called *the College of Relators*, “who would supervise the writing of a historical-critical account of the candidate’s life, virtues and in appropriate causes, martyrdom.”¹⁶⁰

The calling of witnesses would only be to confirm collected data. In effect then, the “relator had replaced both the Devil’s Advocate and the defence lawyer”¹⁶¹ The entire process has become heavily academic and the choice of miracles, basically medical and scientific.¹⁶² As at 1990, the *Consulta Medica* meets every two weeks to examine potential miracles. Woodward is convinced that the physicians appear to be more distinguished in medicine than the theological consultants are in theology.¹⁶³ The cases brought to them are those that have already been certified by local physicians and experts on the diocesan or local level.

¹⁵⁹ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 91

¹⁶⁰ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 91

¹⁶¹ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 91

¹⁶² Cf. Woodward, *Making Saints*, 92. With the old system, about four *positios* were barely completed each year and as at 1980, the backlog numbered well over a thousand causes. The all time high rate of canonization in recent years is partly due to the change brought by this method. Push for changes were led by Agustino Amore (A Conventual Black American) who also insisted that the vocabulary “trial” (*processus*) should be avoided to make it sound less juridical and apologetic.

¹⁶³ The *Consulta Medica* as at 1990 was made up of a panel of five experts representing *all* medical specialties and drawn from a pool of more than sixty physicians who constitute the larger body of the *Consulta Medica*. Cf. Woodward, *Making Saints*, 194.

As an official rule¹⁶⁴, the procedure for identifying a medical miracle can be divided into three.

It begins by taking the *medical history* of the patient, (including hospital records and information about all doctors, nurses and other assistants involved in the treatment of the person). This is followed by a scrutiny of the *testimonies* of medical personnel and any other person (irrespective of their medical knowledge and background). Testimonies include all possible and available scientific evidence (slides of biopsies, x-rays, and others that the *consulta* may demand as the case may be). These testimonies have to be *judged* to see if the procedures used were truly medical (diagnosis, prognosis, the therapeutic choice employed, stage or degree of completeness of the cure and the duration of the process).

The third stage of deciding if a miracle has medical characteristics is the *judgment* passed by the panel. The judgment is only to define whether the cure is *inexplicable* by natural means or if it is *natural*. That is why their definition does not say if the case is a miracle or not, since their concern is for the explanation and classification, saying whether the cure is with or without natural explanation. Some diseases which have natural remission are not included in cases of medical miracles and the reason for this is because of lack of certainty on the part of physicians, some of them are: all cases of mental disorders and “cancers such as lymphoma, renal cell cancer, skin cancer, and cancer of the breast, which have a high statistical rate of natural remission.”¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ The model presented here is the one used by the *Consulta Medica* who work under the Congregation for the Cause of Saints. It is part of the canonical procedure for causes of beatification and canonization made public in the Vatican City on September 12, 1997.

¹⁶⁵ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 195.

They pass their *definition* to the *theological consultants* who have to *decide* if the cure can be called a miracle.

2.6 Examples of medical miracles verified for the canonization of saints in recent times

On June 10 2001 (Trinity Sunday), the Holy Father canonized five saints at the Vatican.¹⁶⁶ One of them, Luigi Scrosoppi was canonised because of a medical miracle attributed to his intercession. Peter Chungu Shitima of Zambia was miraculously healed of the HIV virus which was already diagnosed as a terminally full-blown AIDS. According to his doctors, series of examinations and tests had revealed that Peter was a “terminal patient”.¹⁶⁷

The same is the case with the beatification of Blessed Tansi of Nigeria (beatified in 1998). It had to be a miracle of a medical nature. For the beatification of Padre Pio, “The miracle was recognised by the Pope, after the approval of the three commissions that are canonically required. The Medical Council of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, that met on 30 April 1998 examined the cure of Mrs Consiglia De Martino (from traumatic rupture of the thoracic duct in the neck, that took place on 3 November 1995, and was unanimously assessed (5 votes

¹⁶⁶ Luigi Scrosoppi +1884; founder of the Sisters of Providence of St. Cajetan of Theine, Agostino Roscelli +1902; founder of the sisters of the Immaculate, Bernard of Corleone +1667; a Capuchin lay Brother, Teresa Eustochio Verzeri +1852; foundress of the Daughters of the Sacred Heart Jesus, and Rafqa Pietra Choboq (also known as Rafka, Rebecca, Pierina or Boutrosiya +1914) a Sister from Lebanon of the Maronite Order.

¹⁶⁷ Cf. Declaration given by Drs. Toit, Johannes Le Roux and Foster during the investigation in the process of canonization of Luigi Scrosoppi in <http://www.cin.org/archives/cinjub/200106/0049.html> (see appendix).

out of 5) 'scientifically unexplainable'.¹⁶⁸ Without going into much detail, it suffices to say that in recent times even very old cases are being revisited when there is a reported case of a medical miracle. There is no way to tell in "advance where or when a verifiable miracle will turn up. There is, however, a rough sociology of the miraculous".¹⁶⁹ This notion of the 'sociology of the miraculous' implies a certain kind of hesitation in the acceptance of medical miracles from countries that are not generally considered 'medically advanced' especially in eastern Europe, Asia, South America and Africa.¹⁷⁰ For the canonization of the Sudanese slave saint Bakhita on 1st October 2000, it had to be a medical miracle of a Brazilian woman. The list of examples could be endless. The emphasis here is that the importance of healing in the mystery of the Church is not only biblical but also very contemporary and one clear area where this element of faith is still highly emphasised is in the canonization process. The methodology of this process today invites one to see how similar types of miracles (medical/physical) were relevant in the early Christian community in the proclamation of the Good News as we find in the opening chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

¹⁶⁸ Report of the Vice postulator. "The Theological Commission, that consisted of the Promoter General of the faith and six theological consultants, on 22 June 1998, examined the same extraordinary cure and after detailed discussion, expressed themselves unanimously in the affirmative (7 votes out of 7), describing it a third class miracle" Cf. <http://www.padrepio.org.uk/cause.htm>

¹⁶⁹ Woodward, *Making Saints*, 197.

¹⁷⁰ It is vital to note that with the present system, miracles are virtually impossible to prove without modern science and medical technology. If a medical miracle which took place in Africa is certified by the *Consulta Medica* in Rome as 'scientifically inexplicable', then one can be sure that if the concept of the 'sociology of the miraculous' is anything to go by, that miracle would have been thoroughly investigated and extensively re-examined. Cf. Woodward, *Making Saints*, 194.

2.7 Conclusion

The verification process of miracles has been highly systematised over the years. This is influenced by the increasing demand of people to be certain about phenomenological experience. The present form continues to rely on divine *signs* as were performed in the early Christian communities. The Church at every age has to discern ways to reach and express similar experiences of faith.

CHAPTER THREE

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MODERN MEDICAL MIRACLES AND

ACTS 3:1-10

3.1 Introduction

The Church is one and the Christian community has always strived to preserve and nurture the gift of faith handed down by the apostles. Modern medical miracles have some common traits and significance with that of Acts 3:1-10. That is why an analysis of both may help one not only to discover the continuity between the past and the present, but also to make such biblical accounts relevant today. In this chapter, the comparison made is based on the observable features found in the reading of Acts 3 and the miracles used for the making of saints. There are similarities and dissimilarities.

3.2 Similarities

(a). A Common System

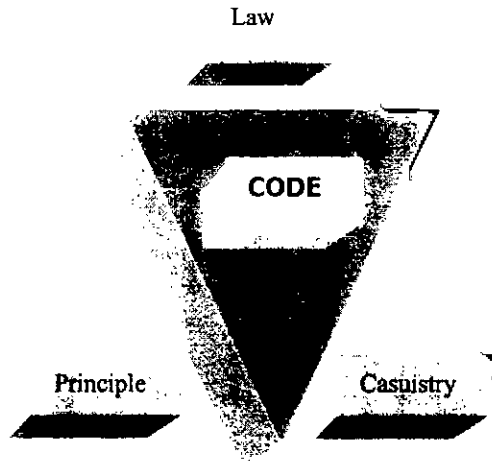
Biblical miracle accounts have often been a source of conflict between the *Empiricists* and the *Spiritualists*. The similarities and dissimilarities between medical miracles that have been verified for the canonization of Saints and the account found in Acts 3:1-10 help one to come close to finding out the part that Christianity plays in the understanding of, and coping with, disease and illness. "The battle against disease is one from which there are no exemptions. Some people are drafted for lifelong struggles against chronic ailments, permanent handicaps, and

native disabilities. Others, more fortunate, have only occasional engagements with the enemy. The question is: What part does the Christian religion play in the battle against disease?"¹⁷¹ Some people believe that Christianity and religion as a whole has a part to play, while others believe the exact opposite.

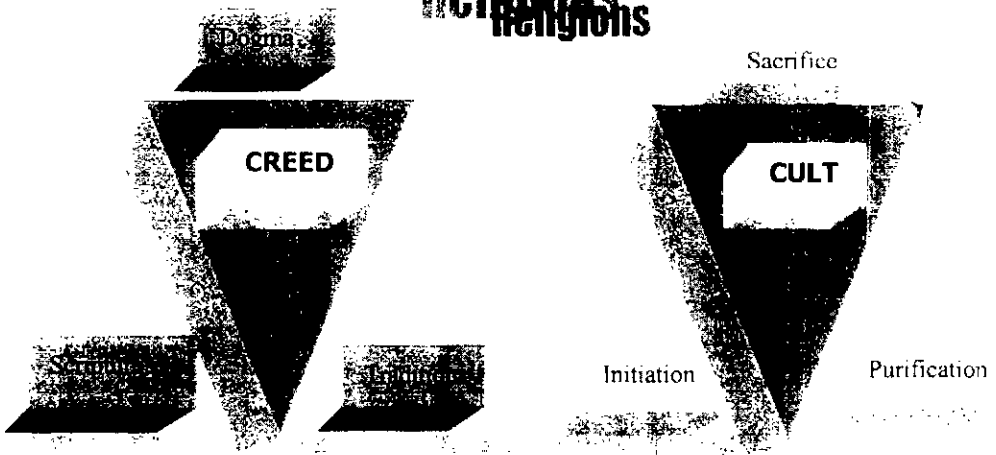
The element of the 'miraculous' is an integral part of the components that make up any systematised religion. It might be useful to elaborate this idea so as to understand the comparison that is contained in this last chapter.

Miracles do not just happen, they are part of an integral network of religion as a *system* and whether they happen in scripture or in the sociological experience of daily life, they stem from a common denominator: a belief system based on an experience of faith.

¹⁷¹ Buttrick, et al. eds., The Acts of the Apostles, 55.



**Elements of
institutionalised
religions**



Trinitarian-angular model of the Elements of Institutionalised Religions

There are three main pillars: code, cult and creed, each of which is made up of three elements: sometimes called the elements of institutionalised religions.¹⁷²

¹⁷² These elements were discussed in a course on Comparative Religion at the Salesian Institute of Philosophy, Moshi, Tanzania in 1995.

Code contains specifics and details. It rules the innermost parts of the conscience and stands out as a guide, which give a sense of belonging and identity. It is made up of *Principle* (based on natural reason and wisdom), *Law* (modalities and description of the way and extent things should go), and *Casuistry* (minor details, minute observation and often exaggerated). Code has a limitation of creating a sense of guilt or self-justification and the 'crisis of conscience'.

Creed refers to the intellectual aspect of religion, explaining and clarifying things about the religion. Its divisions are *Scripture* (collection of words: books, sacred writings and documents), *Tradition* (lived, narrated or written, handed down; containing vital and specific teachings and practices) and *Dogma* (defined and declared truths which form the pillars of the religion). It cannot be changed or modified but can be adapted to changing times without the slightest admission of mixture or contradiction.

The third element, which is Cult, contains the mystical aspect of religion, based on experience and reality. It is divided into *Initiation* (varieties of stages and *rites de passage* in the spiritual realm), *Purification* (practices of cleansing and quest for progress, perfection and satisfaction) and *Sacrifice* (atonement, appeasing, oblation, re-enacting, symbolic and having deeper meaning than what is physically expressed). Any form of religious experience necessarily needs to contain all these basic elements (code, cult, and creed) to make it holistic and profound.

Similarities between medical miracles for the canonization of saints ¹⁷³ and the account of the healing of the lame man at the beautiful gate (Acts 3:1-10) stem fundamentally from the shoot of religious experience. And the connectedness of the elements of institutionalised religions (Code, Cult and Creed), are all aspects of the same complex reality. What is narrated in Scripture which is a part of the element of *Creed*, is seen happening again and again in the mystical experience of *Cult* and it is the same basic revelation that has been systematised in a form of *Code* having regular patterns of verification and investigation. So when we read of a miraculous account in the Acts it is not totally unrelated to the miracles happening in the pietistic veneration and 'cult of the saints' which are extra biblical. Similarly, the faith and belief which are entailed in the element of *Creed* are deeply connected to the experience of contemporary miracles which are like continuous confirmations of those signs and messages contained in the scriptures. This is why one may say that Acts 3:1-10 and modern medical miracles both fit into the same belief system. This belief system and its characteristics thus become a common umbrella under which a comparison can be made between what is revealed in the word of God and the continuous practice of the Christian community down through the years.

(b) A Similar type of Miracle

Another major similarity is the fact that miracle of Acts 3 and an overwhelming majority of miracles verified for the canonization of saints have something to do

¹⁷³ Also called 'official miracles', in the sense that they have been verified and declared by the Church. Cf. Roberto Italo Zanini, Bakhita: A Saint for the Third Millennium, (ORCA Printing & Advertising Co. Ltd., 2000), 173.

with the human body, medicine, health and above all, are physical (tangible and factual). This does not deny the credibility of other types of miracles. It only implies that the observable system of the saint making process has favoured miracles similar to that of Acts 3 and in a certain way, it bridges the gap between the signs of the early Church with those of today.

(c) People Working in the Power of the Risen Lord

At a first glance, it appears that miracles attributed to saints were *performed by* them. But a closer look soon reveals that it is the power of the risen Lord who has sent his Spirit that is actually at work. One of the most difficult tasks of the saint makers is to discern whether the miracle was due to the intervention of the continuous power of the risen Lord working through people of God (both as agents: instruments and recipients) or some other means, not excluding the *evil one* (including all diabolical means). It takes a concentrated reading to understand that it was not just Peter (and John) who healed the lame man but the risen Christ who was at work in his body (the Church) through those who *believe*. This partly explains why saints are not canonized before their death, as if like a title. Instead, it is prudent to allow them to pass on and to carefully verify (even if it takes years) the depth of the presence of Christ in the life of the person. The miracles that take place after their death come as verification of the presence of Christ and a choice of the Church enlisting them not as the only holy ones (*saints*), but a tiny fraction of examples and signs for those *on the way*. That is why “traditionally, the Church has acknowledged

miracles only reluctantly and after medical or legal evidence has been supplied... nothing is lost by being cautious"¹⁷⁴

(d). Accounts of the Christian Community

There are few doubts today about the fact that the Acts of the Apostles does not contain all the events of the early Church. It is almost taken for granted that accounts such as that of the healing at the gate of the temple are selected out of others and presented in written form to be preserved in the life of the people of God. Similarly, the investigation and preservation of the lives and miracles of saints can be understood as a constant effort of the family of God (Church) to preserve and transmit these signs of the risen Lord in her life. There are no such things as 'private saints' or 'secret saints', since the Christian community collectively acknowledges, after a systematic process, some of those persons and events that continue to testify to the one same salvific act of Christ. In the time of Luke, it is not easy to know how this process was done. However, once completed, the believers could tell that it was truly a working of the Saviour and then propose it to the others in the fellowship as signs and examples. In our days it is now possible to look at the process and examine the method of arriving at such certainties. In this method two underlying factors remain: scientific medical investigation and faith in the intervention of God through miracles as confirmations.

¹⁷⁴ Stephen Astill, "The Healing Ministry and the Medical Profession", notes from a lecture delivered at the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) in a program organized for a Christian Medical group (CMUL) in one of the many talks organized during and after the Millennium (2000) celebrations. In his exposition, Fr. Stephen laid emphasis on the connectedness of Healing and Deliverance as signs of the kingdom and not merely to solve peoples' temporary problems of one form of disease or the other.

That is why the effect has to be the same. People have to feel the need to pray more, to trust more and above all to have faith in God. If a saint is canonised and the event of the canonization does not increase the living faith of the people of God, whether by his life or the workings of God through the intercession of the saints, then the system would begin to lose its credibility.¹⁷⁵

(e) A Deeper Reality

The miracle of chapter 3 of Acts is not just a story narrating one of the events in the primitive Church. Reading through Acts other signs of the presence of the Risen Lord are documented. This healing is linked to the *bold* proclamation of the Good News by Peter and a certain kind of assurance coming to reinforce the *Pentecost experience*.

In the 'making of Saints', the Christian community employs its human and spiritual resources in the thorough examination of the life of one of its members. In the examination of the human life, one comes across different aspects and depths of the person. The underlying factor that is to be discerned is the effect of grace in the life of the person. This is partly why the miracles attributed to saints have to be those that help one to see the presence of the divine. These miracles in themselves are not 'spectacles' or 'wonders' to puzzle or even confuse the human mind. They are revealing (in some way) the signs of the *eschaton*, the presence of a reality which

¹⁷⁵ Unlike most cases, the saint making process of people like Jose Maria Escrivá, left many a critic of the saint making process in doubt, especially because of the accelerated time rate, which they consider to have been manipulated somehow. However, similar reactions were also expressed in the canonization of St. Maria Gorreti and many of the rather young saints, but it seems that as the time goes by, these doubts tend to fade away for different reasons not investigated in the scope of this work.

will be 'all in all' at the end of time. The particular saint remains as an instrument of coming closer to a better understanding of this eschatological reality. As in other cases of the spiritual life, God still remains the initiator. This is the inner reality which these miracles point towards. If this is not perceived in the examination, the miracles may not be declared as 'official'.

3.3 Differences

(a) In life and after death

One of the obvious difference between the miracles for the canonization of saints and that of Peter and John is that for canonization, emphasis is placed only on those miracles which were performed after the death of the saint, whereas in the case of the apostles, the miracle was performed while they were still alive. The miracles attributed to saints while they were alive only adds to their fame but are used in the verification process of saint making. That is why it is possible to find *unknown* persons becoming saints due to the evidence of the signs that were seen after their death, and similarly to find those whom *all* consider saints not being canonised even after centuries.¹⁷⁶ In Acts on the other hand, it is quite clear that Luke was referring to a miracle that took place amongst the followers of Jesus in their own lifetime.

¹⁷⁶ This is the case of so many founders of congregations, highly respected and even *venerated* by the members of their societies but not publicly declared saints by the Church.

(b) Proximity of Locality

In the scene presented at the healing of the lame beggar, everyone is within the same vicinity. (Temple area) and all were probably Jews. There is a direct contact between the 'healers' and the 'healed'. It is as if we have an eyewitness account of the incident. In a contemporary miracle used for canonization, the case is rather different. Those who are said to have interceded in the working of the miracles are not in physical contact with those who receive the healing. For example, in the case of the canonization of Bakhita, one of the official miracles for her canonization happened to a Brazilian woman¹⁷⁷ who never knew much about her until she met a Canossian sister in a hospital. The link of an African slave-girl, later turned nun in Italy, with a Brazilian sick woman years after her death, goes beyond the 'ordinary'. These kinds of miracles are rather common, for example, a sick person seeking the intercession of a servant of God or a 'Blessed' only by reading a formulated prayer found on the back of a holy picture and no other knowledge about this person. The difference here is not only that of proximity of locality but also lack of sufficient knowledge.

¹⁷⁷ Eva Da Costa, born at Iguape in the state of Sao Paula (Jan. 1, 1931), legally separated from her husband and having four children. Diagnosed by a specialist in 1991 of having ulcers in the lower limbs with chronic insufficient circulation, obesity and arterial hypertension, pointing to the possibility of amputation of her right leg, since there were symptoms of gangrene. "In both legs the wounds were so deep that the bone was visible" Cf. Roberto Italo Zanini, Bakhita: A Saint for the Third Millennium, (Custer, WA: ORCA Printing & Advertising Co. Ltd., 2000), 176. The cure of Eva Da Costa took only about twenty-four hours.

(c) A male dominated scene

In the narration of Acts 3, men are at the centre of the stage. Without going into details about Jewish religious practices and prescriptions about the location of people within the temple area, here it suffices to mention that when comparing this particular miracle with those used today for the canonization of saints, it stands out rather clearly that most of the miracles attributed to both male and female saints include some involvement of both genders. Miracles for canonization are international and border-free. Religious and cultural variations abound and they even make them appear more genuine.¹⁷⁸

3.4 Conclusion

The account of Acts 3:1-10 and modern medical miracles verified for the canonization of saints, fall into the same category of a belief-system, of *institutionalised religions*. The goal remains primarily to proclaim the presence of the risen Lord who is to come in glory. The Christian community has the responsibility of verifying these facts and also of making use of them as one of the means of evangelisation.

¹⁷⁸ Investigations often seek to see how universal and integral the circumstances behind the miracles have been. Who were those praying for it? Was there any previous sign of such a wonder coming to happen? Who and what were these signs?

Most of the differences between the miracle in Acts 3 and the similar ones used for the canonization of saints are time-bound. They are influenced by cultural differences and social patterns.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The command of Jesus to 'go out and preach the Good News' is followed by an assurance: 'I will be with you always'. This command needs to be constantly emphasized in the proclamation of the truth that the world has been redeemed. In the obvious confusion of the co-existence of good and evil in human experience, the belief in the miraculous has drifted to two extremes. On the one hand, the miraculous is seen as the only way to survive, in fact, 'everything is a miracle'! On the other hand, due to despair, struggle and a zest for 'actualities', others have chosen to deny the possibility of miracles completely.

In the account of the healing of a man in the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christian community had to decide for what purpose such an encounter could be used. They used it as a *means* of proclaiming their faith and belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and that there is salvation in no one else.

Today, the same *Church* is having similar manifestations and has the responsibility of explaining what these signs mean and also must decide how to use them. In the process of canonization, the Church uses a methodology to decipher the presence of Jesus in her life. Having ascertained this fact, the people of God use the experience to proclaim the same good news that the Kingdom of God has come.

Only a few years ago, children in the Sunday school were interested in reading the lives of saints. They kept saints as models and longed for a day when they will become one too. Pastoral experience in many African urban areas today shows that role models and heroes of Catholic youths are no more saints, but successful and

famous people in the realms of show-biz, sport, history and politics. Today, the Christian community celebrates the canonization of saints even more frequently than in the past, and these may seem irrelevant to the young generation.

One reason for this lackadaisical attitude may be due to the fact that with an increasing desire for clarity and a rather high degree of inquisitiveness, young people do not feel a part of. The process of the canonization of saints is a difficult one, but not something hidden or 'done in the dark'. In fact, it is one of the most public acts of the Church, from inquiry to public proclamation.

Finally, the big rift between the common esteem for the veracity of the accounts of miracles in scriptures and those of our time, challenges one to reflect on the role of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the daily preparation of the people of God, through similar signs, for the final coming of the saviour, when 'all tears will be wiped away' and we would all 'rise up and walk' in the name of Jesus the Nazarene.

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APPENDIX

VATICAN CITY, SEP 12, 1997 (VIS) - Today the Holy See Press Office made public the following note on canonical procedure for causes of beatification and canonization:

"1. Canon norms regarding the procedure to be followed for causes of saints are contained in the Apostolic Constitution 'Divinus Perfectionis Magister,' promulgated by John Paul II on January 25, 1983.

"2. To begin a cause it is necessary for at least 5 years to have passed since the death of the candidate. This is to allow greater balance and objectivity in evaluating the case and to let the emotions of the moment dissipate.

"3. The bishop of the diocese in which the person whose beatification is being requested died is responsible for beginning the investigation. The promoter group ('Actor Causae'): diocese, parish, religious congregation, association, asks the bishop through the postulator for the opening of the investigation. The bishop, once the 'nulla osta' of the Holy See is obtained, forms a diocesan tribunal for this purpose. Witnesses are called before the tribunal to recount concrete facts on the exercise of Christian virtues considered heroic, that is, the theological virtues: faith, hope and charity, and the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude, and others specific to his state in life. In addition, all documents regarding the candidate must be gathered. At this point he is entitled to the title of Servant of God.

"4. Once the diocesan investigation is finished, the acts and documentation are passed on to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints. The public copy used for further work is put together here. The postulator, resident in Rome, follows the preparation of the 'Positio', or summary of the documentation that proves the heroic exercise of virtue, under the direction of a relator of the Congregation. The 'Positio' undergoes an examination (theological) by nine theologians who give their vote. If the majority of the theologians are in favour, the cause is passed on for examination by cardinals and bishops who are members of the congregation. They hold meetings twice a month. If their judgment is favourable, the prefect of the congregation presents the results of the entire course of the cause to the Holy Father, who gives his approval and authorizes the congregation to draft the relative decree. The public reading and promulgation of the decree follows.

"5. For the beatification of a confessor a miracle attributed to the Servant of God, verified after his death, is necessary. The required miracle must be proven through the appropriate canonical investigation, following a procedure analogous to that for heroic virtues. This one too is concluded with the relative decree. Once the two decrees are promulgated (regarding the heroic virtues and the miracle) the Holy Father decides on beatification, which is the concession of public worship, limited to a particular sphere. With beatification the candidate receives the title of Blessed.

"6. For canonization another miracle is needed, attributed to the intercession of the Blessed and having occurred after his beatification. The methods for ascertainment of the affirmed miracle are the same as those followed for beatification. Canonization is understood as the concession of public worship in the Universal Church. Pontifical infallibility is involved. With canonization, the Blessed acquires the title of Saint."

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Other Internet materials are printed below.

Date: Thu, 07 Jun 2001 11:23:29 -0500
From: "Society of Our Lady of the Most Holy Trinity (SOLT)" <rgant@flash.net>
Subject: Jubilee 2000: Blessed Luigi Scrosoppi Heals Aids Patient; Canonization Sun

The AIDS Miracle That Led to a Canonization Doctors Gave Up Hope for Zambian Catechist

VATICAN CITY, JUNE 6, 2001 (Zenit.org).- Doctors in 1996 had given up hope for Peter Changu Shitima, an AIDS patient from Zambia.

The young catechist was suffering from neuritis, an inflammation of the nerves. He often felt cold and exhausted and had troubling hearing and seeing.

HIV-positive, his prospects were not good. "We believed he was in the terminal phase," Dr. Pete du Toit later testified.

But Changu did not give up hope. He and the Catholic community of Oudtshoorn, South Africa, where he lived, started praying for the intercession of Blessed Luigi Scrosoppi, of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Changu was a student with the Oratory in Oudtshoorn.

The prayers worked: Changu had what his doctors called a miraculous recovery.

The Vatican agreed. This Sunday, John Paul II will canonize Luigi Scrosoppi, along with four other blessed, in St. Peter's Square.

In 1996, Changu, son of a school director, began to have health problems. He always felt cold, even in hot weather; had trouble hearing and seeing; and was constantly tired.

Father John Newton Johnson, the Oratory's superior, later wrote in the minutes of the canonization process, the domain of the Vatican Congregation for the Causes of Saints, that Changu "began to feel faint and complained that he was tired. I thought it was simply exhaustion. Then we thought it might be a severe cold or influenza. Then the process accelerated. Dr. Pete du Toit told us that we should take him to the hospital."

Du Toit, a South African, declared for the process of canonization that "daily Dr. Johannes Le Roux, my assistant, and I, took care of Peter Changu Shitima when he entered hospital on June 8, until August 14, 1996. This can be verified by the hospital notes. ... We believed he was in the terminal phase and, given the opinion that there was nothing to be done medically to cure him, I consulted Dr. Foster, who examined him once and concluded that he was a terminal patient."

"Then we all agreed to send him to Zambia so that he could spend his last days with his family," du Toit's testimony continues. "He understood that he was about to die."

Changu, who by now could scarcely lift his legs and had developed a serious form of peripheral neuritis, recalled "Before going into hospital, I did not take it seriously, I thought I would recover. Then, once in hospital, I felt the impact."

"When the doctor told me what I had, I was destroyed," he said. "But I thought the only thing I could do was to pray and ask God for strength. I prayed to Luigi Scrosoppi and I told him that I would either die or be cured through his intercession, if it was the Lord's will."

The Catholic community of Oudtshoorn, near Capetown, also began to pray to Blessed Scrosoppi [1804-1884] on Changu's behalf.

On the night of Oct. 9, 1996, Changu went to bed as normal. During the night he dreamed of Scrosoppi. The next morning Changu woke up feeling extraordinarily well.

"I got up and went to work immediately in the parish," he later said during the canonization process. "I was hungry, and I walked until I arrived in a village that was quite far away."

Hoping to return as soon as possible to Oudtshoorn, Changu sent a letter to Father Johnson, the superior at the Oratory, to tell him he was cured.

The doctors Le Roux and du Toit, both non-Catholics who had extensive experience in cases of AIDS patients, did not hesitate to use the term "miracle" in describing Changu's recovery.

Le Roux said: "He was a terminal patient and, in a couple of months, he was cured. If there was another reason, totally different from neuritis, then a person could be cured. However, not only did he have neuritis, he had lost some 22 kilos, suffered from fever and other dysfunctions. The blood analysis shows that he is still positive with the HIV virus, but, in my opinion, it is a miracle. We thought he was going to die and, to be honest, he is very well now."

Du Toit made this statement: "Months later, someone told me Changu was better. I told myself this was impossible. I was astounded. I thought it was a mistake. When he returned, I asked him to come for examinations. I made blood analyses again in February and March after his return. I was astounded. Changu had been cured of the disease, of the neuritis that was killing him, because of AIDS. I cannot explain this scientifically."

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AIDS Cure Clears Way for Canonization

of Blessed Luigi Scrosoppi

AIDS Cure Clears Way for Canonization '96 Miracle Will Raise Luigi Scrosoppi to Altars

VATICAN CITY, MAR. 15, 2001 (Zenit.org). - The miraculous cure of an AIDS patient attributed to Luigi Scrosoppi, has made it possible to declare this 19th-century religious a saint of the Catholic Church.

The case dates back to 1996 Peter Changu Shitima, a young catechist in Zambia, where this disease had become one of the main causes of death, was at home on his deathbed. Doctors of the hospital in Oudtshoorn, South Africa, could do no more.

"He could scarcely lift his legs, and had developed a serious case of peripheral neuritis," according to testimony given in the case. "He could not stay in bed without help. He was a terminal AIDS patient and nothing could be done."

The catechist's parish community then began to pray to Blessed Luigi, religious of the St. Philip Neri Oratory. "given that he was Changu's favorite figure, with whose charism he identified most," the witnesses said in the cause for canonization.

On the night of Oct. 9, 1996, Changu went to bed and dreamed of the blessed. He woke up in the morning feeling absolutely fine.

Pete de Toit, one of the doctors on the case, said: "I sent him home because he was a terminal patient and he returned brimming with health." Changu is now a seminarian.

Blessed Scrosoppi (1804-1884), Italian priest and founder of the Sisters of Providence of St. Cajetan Thiene, had this motto in life: "The poor and the sick are our proprietors, and they represent the very person of Jesus Christ." Blessed Scrosoppi will be canonized June 10. His feast is celebrated April 3.

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St Bernard of Corleone: unceasing prayer and union with God

4. "Glory to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit".

The evangelical witness of *St Bernard of Corleone*, elevated to the honour of the altars today, observed within the mystery of the Trinity gains a particular effectiveness. All wondered and asked how a simple lay brother could discourse so well about the mystery of the Trinity. In fact, his life was entirely directed toward God, by a constant ascetical exertion joined with prayer and penance. Those who knew him agreed in testifying that "he was always at prayer", "never ceased to pray", "prayed constantly" (*Summ.*, 35). From such an uninterrupted conversation with God, which found in the Eucharist its ongo-

ing point of authentic holiness.

St Teresa Eustochio Verzeri: faith in providence and abandonment to direction of Spirit

5. "The Spirit of truth will lead you into all truth" (*Communion antiphon*). *Teresa Eustochio Verzeri*, whom today we contemplate in the glory of God, in her brief but intense life knew how to be led with docility by the Holy Spirit. God revealed himself to her as a mysterious presence before whom we must bow with profound humility. Her joy was to be considered under constant divine protection, feeling herself in the hands of the heavenly Father, whom she learned to trust in forever.

Abandoning herself to the action of the Spirit, Teresa lived the particular mystical experience of the "absence of God". Only an unshakable faith kept her from losing her confidence in the provi-

dence and exterior sufferings one must keep alive faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit

St Rafqa: union with Christ on the Cross in patiently bearing suffering

6. By canonizing Blessed *Rafqa Chobq Ar-Raves*, the Church sheds a very particular light on the mystery of love given and received for the glory of God and the salvation of the world. This nun of the Lebanese Maronite Order desired to love and to give her life for her people. In the sufferings which never left her for 29 years of her life St Rafqa always showed a passionate and generous love for the salvation of her brothers, drawing from her union with Christ, who died on the cross, the force to accept voluntarily and to love suffering, the authentic way of holiness.

May St Rafqa watch over those who know suffering, particularly over the peoples of the Middle East who must face a destructive and sterile spiral of violence. Through her intercession, let us ask the Lord to open hearts to the patient quest for new ways to peace and so hasten the advent of reconciliation and harmony.

7. "O Lord our God, how great is your name through all the earth" (P 8.2.10). Contemplating these outstanding examples of holiness, the psalmist's exclamation comes spontaneously to mind. The Lord does not stop at the Church and to the world, wonderful examples of men and women who are reflections of the glory of the Father. Their witness incites us to raise our hearts to heaven and to seek without pause the kingdom of God and his justice.

May Mary the Queen of all who who first heard the call of the Almighty, uphold us in our service of God and neighbor. And may our venerated saints Luigi Scrosoppi, Agostino Rocca, li, Bernardo da Corleone, Teresa Eustochio Verzeri, Rafqa Pietra Chobq Ar-Raves, so that our lives like yours may give praise to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen



Holy Father blesses Peter Chungu Shitima of Zambia cured of AIDS by St Luigi Scrosoppi

THE CAUSE

All of you know, that the Beatification of Padre Pio will take place in St Peter's Square on 2 May 1999.

I believe this is a good opportunity to outline what beatification signifies.

Beatification is something relatively recent. Before the 16th century, there was no beatification before a canonization. However, there began in that century, the practice to allow the public and ecclesiastical cult, in certain determined places, for a few servants of God whose causes of canonization had not been ended or even prepared. This concession, was named beatification.

In the first half of the 16th century the beatification became the ordinary practice, but unlike in the past, the limited cult was conceded as a rule only after the virtues and miracles had been discussed and approved. After that the beatification became an obligatory step before a canonization.

But what is a beatification?

It is the permission on the part of the Supreme Pontiff to venerate publicly a servant of God, however in restricted and determined places.

In practice, now that Padre Pio is proclaimed blessed he, from the point of view of cult, is allowed to be venerated publicly in the diocese of Manfredonia-vieste, in the churches of the Franciscan order and wherever there is an interest in his cult, for example where there are his prayer groups. In this last case, it is necessary to ask permission from the Congregation for Divine Cult.

By cult is signified the concession of a Mass and Office in honour of the blessed and the permission to display his image for the veneration of the faithful in determined churches. Moreover, according to the *Code of Postulators*, the public and ecclesiastical cult, that can be given to the newly blessed, includes also other elements; the exposition of his body publicly in church (under the altar or other places), the conservation of his relics with those of the saints, the halo around his head in images, the dedication of altars or churches in his honour, etc.

As is well known, for a venerable servant of God to be declared blessed, there are two conditions necessary: the recognition of the virtues practised by him to a heroic degree and the approval of a miracle worked by our Lord through his intercession.

For the venerable Padre Pio both these conditions have been authenticated. The heroic virtues were recognised on 18 December 1997.

The miracle was recognised by the Pope, after the approval of the three commissions that are canonically required. The Medical Council of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, that met on 30 April 1998 examined the cure of Mrs Consiglia De Martino (from a traumatic rupture of the thoracic duct in the neck, that took place on 3 November 1995, and was unanimously assessed (5 votes out of 5) "scientifically unexplainable."

The Theological Commission, that consisted of the Promoter General of the faith and the six theological consultants, on 22 June 1998, examined the same extraordinary cure and after detailed discussion, expressed themselves unanimously in the affirmative (7 votes out of 7), describing it a third class miracle.

The same favourable view was expressed by the commission of Cardinals in the month of October of last year.

Finally the Pope officially recognised it a miracle with the decree of 21 December 1998.

From the canonical point of view, Padre Pio had all his papers in order to be declared blessed. But he had all his papers in order also and above all from a spiritual and evangelical point of view. In fact, he faithfully observed the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus in the Gospel to Saint Matthew. Poor in spirit, afflicted, meek, hungry and thirsty for justice, merciful, pure in heart, a peacemaker, persecuted for righteousness.

Padre Pio is now Blessed of the Church of God, but to extend his cult all over the world it is needed that he

will be Canonized. To reach this last step of Sainthood it is heeded that he performs another miracle.

Let us pray that God, through his intercession, will let it happen soon, as we all wish him to be among the multitude of saints.

The *Vice-Postulator*

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