

A CONTEMPORAY MIRACLE. THE HEALING OF BISHOP PANTELEIMON OF GHANA.

The following information was taken from the Chronicles of the Missionary work for the year 2000 of the Holy Diocese of Ghana of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa.

His Grace Panteleimon, Bishop of Ghana, addressed the people of Akrokyere village, which is located in North Ghana (Ashanti Region).

“With the ending of the service of Great Vespers, traditional songs, accompanied by African drums, followed. All participated. All sung and the women danced. Young people presented the miracles of Christ. At the end, Fr. Alexios asked His Grace, if he wished to say anything? He then narrated the miracle which the Lord God performed and cured him through the All Holy and Blessed Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary. This miracle took place at the Hospital “EVANGELISMOS” in Athens, some years ago, when he fell very ill because of cancer in spine and was paralyzed for two whole years (January 1985 – July 1986).

His testimony was a thrilling one. It was a contemporary testimony which assured, that God performs miracles even today, when we truly believe and do not doubt the Divine Power. Everyone listened with great attention. It was a personal testimony and not a narrative from old stories.

“I was just 29 years old. I was in the second year of my studies in the Cappodistrian University of Theology, Athens. I left my home island, Kalymnos, on the 8th January 1985, and I traveled to Athens to participate in the January exams. It was exactly after the feast day of St. John, the Baptist of that year.

“In two weeks time, I became so ill, that I was unable to find any rest. My whole body was in great pain. I had no one next to me. I was completely alone in the house which I had rented from my first year of studies. Few of my best friends noticed that I was attending anymore the lessons. This for them was strange, because I never missed a lesson. They decided to pay me a visit. When I opened the door, they were socked of what they saw. I was so ill and in such pain that they hardly recognized me. They did not hesitate; they took immediately to the Clergy Hospital near St. Barbara, Athens.

“I stayed in that Hospital, if I can remember, almost two weeks. But, day by day things became worse. I was afraid to clime down the stairs. I started not to feel my legs. Then the doctors decided to make a sample from the spinal

cord. The results were bad. I had to go to larger Hospital, so they sent me on the 10th February to the General Hospital "THE EVANGELISMOS", Athens.

"My sister, Themis, meanwhile had arrived and was with me. I had not informed my family till that time, because I did not know what I had.

"As I was living the Clergy Hospital, I passed from the small chapel which was dedicated to St. Haralambos, the hieromartyr. I just turn my face to the holy icon of the great Saint and asked him to be with me.

"We arrived at the General Hospital "THE EVANGELISMOS" and immediately, a team of neurologists put in the spinal cord a special liquid. That's where they found the main problem. The cancer had spread to the spinal cord and by pressuring it caused the paralysis from the stomach down to the feet.

"Then they took me into a small waiting room. I was very clear in my mind, not effective by any drugs. I was just waiting patiently for the results and what the doctors had to say. But, suddenly, I heard a man's voice speaking to me and saying:

"You must not leave Greece, for the Virgin Mary will heal you hear. But, if you leave you shall die".

I was shocked, in the beginning. I turned my head left and right. No one was in the room. So, I said to my self, that 'it was my imagination'. But, as soon as I relaxed again and as I seeing the medical equipments I heard the same voice speaking to me again saying:

"You must not leave Greece, for the Virgin Mary will heal you hear. But, if you leave you shall die".

And before I had the chance to look around the room, one of the doctors entered the room and said to me:

"Father we had decided that you cannot be operated in Greece and that you must leave immediately either for England or for America, the choice is yours. We cannot operate you".

I refused and explained my reasons. I even reveal to him what just took place few minutes ago.

He said: "You know, Father, I am also an Orthodox Christian and I also believe in our God, but here we are dealing with your life. Every second which passes is against you. You must leave at once".

Then, I replied and said: "No, I will not go. I do not know what that voice was, and who spoke to me. But, if it was from God, then I will obey and if you do not want to operate me, then I prefer to die rather than disobey that voice"!

"The doctors had no other choice. My sister Themis and few of my good friends were there with me. One of my Professors, George Gratseas also was present. They operated me on that same day and after ten days they started chemotherapy. Dr. Constantinos Krasanakis was the head surgeon. In the surgeon room, as I was lying down and waiting for Dr. Krasanakis to arrive, I saw the holy icon of the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary. I prayed to Her and said: "Mother of God, I ask you humbly that You make the operation. Use the hands of this doctor and make your miracle for the glory of Your only Son and our God, Jesus Christ".

"It was a difficult period, said Bishop Panteleimon, because every day I faced the danger of death. It was a period of struggle between life and death. But, to be very honest, I never lost my faith and hope, nor my trust in God's promise, that He will cure me through His Mother, the Ever-Virgin Mary and Theotokos, and that the Ever Virgin Mary will be my Doctor and Healer.

"I needed a lot of patience. Although I was under chemotherapy for six months, the cancer spread throughout many parts of my body. From medical point of view, there was no hope at all. Prof. Dr. Constantinos Alexopoulos, Pathologist – Oncologist, prepared my family to receive the bad news. His Eminence Nektarios, Archbishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Kalymnos held a meeting with all the priests of the island and discussed the details for the funeral.

"But, God's Grace acts where the human powers end. Everyone was expecting for the final event to come about. Dr. Alexopoulos informed my sister Themis of what the family should expect in two days. "There is no life in his body, the doctor said, so it advisable to inform the whole family".

"I knew nothing of what they had said. But, during that mid day, as I was speaking with my sister, I experienced the following vision:

"I found myself in countryside, but the villagers had evil faces and were fighting. As soon as they saw me, they started to throw against me bombs,

hand-grenades and all kind of things. Nothing was touching me. Everything was just falling around me. Then I said to myself: "Look at these people, they fight and do not live in peace. I shall depart from here". And I found myself in another village, but the conditions were similar to the first. Then I decided to depart from that place. But, as I was walking on the road, two young men, dressed in white long garments, approached me and stood face to face with me. Their faces were so beautiful, that no artist could ever paint them. As I looked in the one's eyes I was transferred through his body to another world. It was so beautiful! How can I describe such scenery? Everything, plants, flowers, trees, grass were made out of blue crystal diamond. I remember that I touched a rose. It was unbelievable. Although made out diamond, it was alive, warm and had this heavenly fragrance. I saw no one. But, I felt a strong present that was love and peace. When I looked down, I saw other levels, where I saw many of thousands of people in a happy environment. When I lifted up my head to see once again that most indescribable scenery, I found myself again in front of the two young men. They spook to me and I replied to them. What exactly they said and what I answered, I cannot remember the words or the language. It was a language which was only for that moment. But, as I remember very clearly, the one young man was moving his hand as though he was giving me some instructions to follow. And then I was back again speaking to my sister. Now, she told me, that during those few minutes I was facing the holy icon of Christ and speaking to Him, but she could not understand the words. Actually, she believed that it was my final moment.

"Two days passed. The fever never said to come down. Suddenly, one Saturday morning (it must been mid May 1985) at 07:00 am my fever, which for a whole month was over 42.5 C, came down to normal 36.6 C. The nurse was actually quite upset, because she thought I did placed the thermometer correctly. But, I was very sure. She placed it again, and it showed the same results. Then she called my sister Themis, and placed it for the third time. The same results. She called the head-sister, Maria Ktenopoulou to see, but she did not wanted to touch the thermometer, but immediately phoned Prof. Alexopoulos and reported to him of the new events.

"Dr. Alexopoulos, hearing the news that fever just came down to normal, replied: "Sister, we all love and respect Fr. Panteleimon, but this young man must die today or maybe tomorrow. You must accept that there is no life in him. He must die".

"Sister Ktenopoulou replied: "Professor, I do not know, if Fr. Panteleimon must die or not. What I know and see this moment is that his fever has just disappeared and it is the only chance for you to come and see for yourself"!

“The Professor arrived at the Hospital before noon. He was very upset, that they dragged him to my room. He sat down and did not say, “Good morning”. He took the thermometer and when he saw that it was 36.6 C, he could not believe his eyes. So he putted it again and held it for 12 minutes. When he removed it and saw the same results, he stood up, turned the other doctors and said: “What is happening in this room is not from us, but only a God could do these things. Nevertheless, it is a sing for us” and he gave to each one of them special instructions.

“The following Monday, he visited me very early in the morning. He sat next to me and asked me “How do you feel”? I replied and said: “O.K., doctor, but no different”! He said to me: “You know, you are like St. Lazarus, but in a different way. He died and was placed in the tomb for four whole days. You were dying and yet you, before we could put you in the tomb, you just jumped out”. “So, what is your point, Professor”, I asked. He replied: “My point is that on Saturday morning, between 6:00 and 7:00 am something happened and it is the only chance which we have to examine”. I asked: “Well, what happened”? “I really do not know. But, this is the only chance to see. But we need to make some examinations”.

*“Detail medical examinations followed. The result was that **no cancer was found.** The miracle took place.*

“Today, through God’s Grace, I am amongst you as your Bishop and I thank God for His mercy, which He showed to me through His Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

*“For the above reason, I am in the position to say to all of you: **‘Have faith in God. You must have solid faith and steadfastness. Do not allow the thoughts of doubt to reign in your hearts, but rather trust yourselves to the Will of God’.***

This experience I wrote for the glory of God and for the glory of the Mother of God, our Lady, the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Theotokos.