

THE THREE SISTERS

and

PILLAR OF FAITH





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PILLAR OF FAITH

by
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THE THREE SISTERS

CHAPTER 1



The story that I am about to tell you, if you have not guessed by the title, has to do with three sisters. It is taken from a factual story told by St. Robert Bellarmine, a Doctor of the Church. These three ordinary girls had an extraordinary experience that showed them the inestimable value of Our Lady's Most Holy Rosary. It was an experience that changed their lives.

One morning, three sisters set out from their home and made their way to the parish Church. All were silent, their minds deep in thought. Each girl was thinking of her past sins and praying for the grace of a good confession. As they stepped inside, they greeted Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. The sisters got into the line of people waiting to confess their sins to the priest. In their day, the priest usually stayed at a parish since the day he arrived. In this way he knew everyone there pretty well and knew what kind of help they needed to stop sinning. The line moved quickly, and before long it was the eldest sister's turn. When the time came for the priest to give her a penance, the priest stopped and spoke to the eldest sister.

"I have a thought for you and your two sisters," he said. "I would like all three of you to faithfully say the Rosary everyday for a whole year."

The girl at first may have thought it was because their sins were so grave that he gave them so long a penance. But her worries were soon put at rest, for the confessor went on to say, "This is so that you girls may make beautiful robes of glory for Our Lady out of your Rosaries."

The girl's eyes began to shine at these words. Beautiful robes of glory for their Blessed Mother out of their Rosaries! She thanked the priest with all her heart for such a wonderful opportunity to show Mary their love.

When all her sisters were done, she quickly told them of the splendid plan. The two other girls responded with enthusiasm and promised to pray the Rosary to Our Lady. Throughout the following year, though, their zeal began to fade and it was with some effort they continued to pray the Rosary. It was not always easy to say it. On days when they were tired and reluctant to pray they forced themselves to think of the beautiful robes they were making for Our Lady. But what if she didn't notice they were doing this for her? They wouldn't even know until they died. It's so hard to work for a goal you can't see with your earthly eyes. Nevertheless, with Faith and Love they persevered in their daily Rosary for an entire year.

CHAPTER 2



On the feast of the Purification of Our Lady, the three sisters were gathered together alone in the evening. They had daily said the Rosary for a year. They of course would continue to say it, but their goal had been reached. And whether Our Lady had really received robes from them or not, they didn't know. Who could tell? Perhaps they were silly to think they had made robes. Well, Our Lady would obviously know they prayed, and of course it would have pleased her. But was it perhaps a little silly to think that she could actually wear something that was made from their Rosaries? After all, Rosaries are just words and thoughts of prayer, not scissors and cloth. As Queen of Heaven, her garments are far superior than earthly ones and ones made by those on earth. She certainly has nicer things to wear than anything that they can make even if they did make them. What made the sisters do what they did? Faith. They believed that Mary heard their prayers and would be glorified by them. But faith is only faith because we don't know what impact our prayers and sacrifices have until we die. If we could know for certain in this life, than faith would be knowledge; a knowledge of prayer's worth.

As the sisters sat together that dark night, a bright light suddenly filled the whole room. The girls saw that the light came from three beautiful women who had come into the room, from nowhere. One of them surpassed the two others in beauty. It was the Blessed Virgin Mary accompanied by St. Catherine and St. Agnes. Mary was wearing beautiful robes that shone with the words "Hail Mary, full of grace" all over them -blazoned in letters of gold. The three girls could hardly think, they were overwhelmed by their Queen's visit. Our Lady's kind eyes fell on the eldest sister and she gently approached her. The girl's eyes looked into hers and a torrent of peace flowed into her heart as Our Lady spoke: "I salute you, my daughter, because you have saluted me so often and beautifully. I want to thank you for the beautiful robes that you have made me." The robes - her Rosaries. Mary was right there thanking her as she wore them. St. Catherine and St. Agnes also thanked the eldest sister, for her love for Our Lady, shared by the Saints, gave them happiness too. Then as unexpectedly as they had arrived, the three women vanished.

Imagine the happiness they left in that room. The eldest sister's heart was elated. She was among other things, grateful for the wonderful blessing of seeing Our Lady's gratitude while still in this life. Certainly not everyone who practices such a holy devotion will receive such a visit. In the next life, however, they will see their reward and it will be beyond anything they could have imagined. How the sisters must have talked! They had all seen the apparition and, above all, the glorious robes that Our Lady was wearing. "Why did she not thank us?", the youngest asked.

"They were not your Rosaries," her older sister responded.

"Where are our robes then, yours and mine?", she asked. "We prayed too."

"Do not worry, she has them," said the eldest girl.

CHAPTER 3



An hour passed, only noticed as ten minutes by the sisters. They were still rapt in the precious memory of the Heavenly visit. Yet, even as they spoke, they felt the presence of their Queen again. She had returned once more, still accompanied by Saints Catherine and Agnes. Her robes were different now and not the ones made by the eldest sister. Our Lady approached the second eldest now, dressed in robes of green without gold lettering and which no longer gleamed. She thanked the girl for the robes she had made. The second sister hesitated. She had seen Mary's robes before. Why were her sister's more magnificent than her own. Summoning her courage, she asked the Blessed Virgin why there was such a dramatic change. Mary answered, "Your sister made me more beautiful clothes because she has been saying her Rosary more fervently than you." With that, as they had before, the ladies disappeared.

The girls had not expected this second visit, nor the change in Our Lady's dress. With eyes downcast, the second sister pondered Mary's message. The fervency with which she had said her Rosaries had an impact on her robes. She was capable of praying better, and obviously not given her best since the robes were not as brilliant. But she had not prayed poorly, and the peace that comes with the salutation of Our Lady soon filled her heart.

By now the sisters were expecting a third visit. The youngest girl eagerly awaited the Blessed Mother's coming in her robes, for she was obviously the only one left. And, consistent with her last visit, the Blessed Mother came after an hour had passed. The Virgins once again escorted her as she made her way towards the youngest sister. The dazzling beauty of Mary was this time covered with tattered and dirty rags. Dressed in this appalling apparel, she addressed the young girl: "My daughter, I want to thank you for these clothes that you have made me." Shame and remorse instantly filled the girl's heart as the memories of her distracted and hurriedly prayed Rosaries filled her mind. "Oh, my Queen," she cried, "how could I have dressed you so badly? I beg you to forgive me. Please grant me a little more time to make you beautiful robes by saying my Rosary better." Without a word of response, the Blessed Virgin vanished accompanied by the two Saints.

As soon as she could, the heartbroken girl told her confessor everything. She described her two sisters' visions that were followed by Our Lady dressed in her disgraceful rags that she made for her Queen. The confessor urged the youngest sister to say her Rosary for another year and with more devotion. With tears in her eyes, the young girl agreed to do it. What else could she do? Despair and cry about her past impiety or hope in Our Lady's mercy? Of the two, the latter seemed more virtuous. Besides, outweighing everything else, God was speaking through her confessor and in obedience she strove to fulfill this second chance.

With the help of her two dear sisters she prayed her daily Rosary. The memory of the horrible rags she had placed on Our Lady chased away distractions. The good example and encouragement of her sisters enkindled her zeal. The second eldest too, prayed with renewed fervor the Most Holy Rosary. As they had a year ago, the three sisters daily said their Rosary, this time with more devotion, since they

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had seen with their own earthly eyes the fruits of such a holy practice.

They completed their second year. Once more, Our Lady appeared to them, this time dressed more magnificently than before. St. Catherine and St. Agnes were wearing crowns. Mary looked lovingly at the three sisters and said, “My daughters, I have come to tell you that you have earned Heaven at last - and you will all have the great joy of going there tomorrow.” The girls’ hearts burst with joy as they all cried with one voice, “Our hearts are ready, dearest Queen.” Then the vision faded.

That very same night they all became deathly ill. They sent for their confessor who brought them the Last Sacraments. With heavenly gratitude, they thanked the dear priest. It was his idea to make robes for Our Lady. He had given them the practice that had earned Heaven. They would go there that night. Their souls would leave their bodies behind with the earth and pass into eternity. Before they did though they wanted to be sure and thank him. All that matters in this life is to decide where you will be in the next life. The decision comes with hard work if you are aiming towards Heaven. The absolute surest way of reaching that goal is if you have a strong sincere devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. That priest taught those girls that, and it had sped them to that finish line. Maybe the girl would never have made it to Heaven, had it not been for that devotion. Life has many, many distractions and it always will. We have to lessen them and set our priorities straight. We have to ask ourselves what is in-fact really important to have done before we die. For die we will, and we want to, like those three sisters, be certain that we have worked long and hard enough to go to Heaven.

After the sisters had said their night prayers for the last time, the Blessed Mother appeared once more. She was escorted by a multitude of virgins who clothed the three girls in pure white gowns. Angels were there and singing, “Come, spouses of Jesus Christ, receive the crowns which have been prepared for you for all eternity.” The sisters then all departed this life for the never-ending joys of Heaven .

And to this day, those three sisters are still up in Heaven, enjoying the reward of their faithfulness to Our Lady’s most Holy Rosary.

THE END

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PILLAR OF FAITH

CHAPTER 1



f all the Catholic shrines and sanctuaries in Spain, none is probably more ancient or precious to the true Spaniard's heart, then the church of Our Lady of the Pillar (or 'Nuestra Señora del Pilar' as it is known in Spanish) in Saragossa. For what reason? you may ask. Even in light of the countless miracles that pilgrims have been blessed with there, the strongest claim that Our Lady of the Pillar has on their devoted love is the fact that it was founded by Spain's first and greatest missionary – the Apostle St. James the Greater.

The manner, also, in which it was founded, so characteristic of the solicitous affection of our Blessed Mother, was enough to leave a lasting impression on the Catholics of Spain.

Around the year 40 AD, St. James, in his missionary travels, had stopped off at the town of Saragossa. His heart was heavy, for his zealous hopes of winning souls for Christ, were being far from realized. Deep down he prayed for help and for guidance.

His still did have some disciples, and these he would gather at night along the peaceful banks of the river Ebro. There he would instruct them in the Catholic Faith, sharing the same mysteries and truths that he heard from the lips of Our Lord Himself.

It was near midnight, on one of these evenings, when the faithful who were listening to St. James, suddenly heard voices other than the Apostle's. Quite clearly, a very beautiful chant could be heard. As the sacred words 'Ave Maria gratia plena' rang through the air, the Spaniards then saw the angels who were singing. In the midst of the celestial choirs, they beheld a marble pillar and on it, as if on a throne, sat a woman of exquisite beauty.

St. James, gazing in awe at the wonderful apparition, stopped short. Could it be? That lady! Those loving eyes and that sweet smile, so familiar to him! Instantly, the Apostle fell to his knees, recognizing at once the beloved Mother of His Master.

Our Lady, too, looked lovingly toward the apostle, most pleased with the work he was doing for Her Son. She told him, that God wanted him to construct a church upon this spot dedicated to Her,



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His Own Beloved Mother. The Blessed Virgin gave Her word, that to all who would here invoke her with faith and confidence, She would promptly come to their assistance with the fullness of Her loving and Maternal powers. Then, She left as a testimony to her apparition and promise, the marble pillar upon which She sat.

With zealous haste, St. James followed her instructions, and a modest chapel was soon constructed. A statue of the Holy Virgin (which some tradition holds was given with the pillar) was placed upon the miraculous pillar of marble. And since then, Our Lady of the Pillar has been the attraction of countless pilgrims from both within and beyond the borders of Spain.

The simple chapel, favoured by miracles increasingly more numerous and wondrous, became, for the Spaniards, a proof of the love and power of their Heavenly Queen.

And in time, due to their pious devotion, a grander Church was erected over the ancient chapel, which then became the crypt, while still remaining the home of the famous and now miraculous image of Our Lady of the Pillar.

But our story does not end here. Nor is it the task of this tale, to relay the full history of this ancient and miraculous devotion. Rather, this story skips centuries of time – taking us to the year 1638, when a young Spaniard’s humble, devoted love for Our Lady of the Pillar would change his life...

“Come on, now! I think we are ready. This cartload is about full. Are you coming, Michael?”

“I’ll be right there, Uncle!”

Michael Pellicer, a young and robust man of 19, was the son of poor parents from the town of Calanda, in Arragon, Spain. Strong, and pious for his age, Michael lived and worked with one of his uncles, in Valencia.

It was harvest time, and the fields had yielded a bountiful crop. Michael was quite grateful to the good God and His Blessed Mother. More work meant more pay. And the better the harvest, the less likely he or his family would go hungry. Poor as his family was, Divine Providence always took care of them, and Michael had great confidence in his Heavenly Father and Mother.

Climbing up into the heavily laden cart of corn, the hard-working lad prepared to enjoy the somewhat less tedious part of his task: escorting the corn to storage.

But this was a ride that he would never finish.

To everyone’s dismay and shock, Michael unexpectedly lost his balance and suddenly toppled out of the moving cart. His fall was not far enough though. For in the rapid moments that followed, Michael’s leg got caught beneath the large, rolling wheel as the heavy cart passed over him.

The poor youth cried out in pain, and his companions instantly stopped the horse and cart and rushed to his side.

CHAPTER 1

“Michael!”

“What happened?”

“My... my leg, Uncle. The wheel. It ran over it...” Michael gestured with his arm.

“Oh my goodness...” the old man bit his lip. It was clearly a bad injury. “Here. We have to get you to the hospital.”

“But, Uncle...!” Michael shifted in pain. “We don’t have money to pay a doctor.”

“Don’t you worry about that!” his uncle snapped back. Then, with a hand on his nephew’s shoulder. “Let’s get you up, Michael. Come on, fellows, give me a hand here.”

“Don’t you worry! We’ll take him.”

“Here,” one of the men tore a strip off his rugged shirt. “Tie this above his knee.”

“Someone go fetch a cart!”

“Wait, I see one coming! Wave it over.”

“He sees us... Hey! Over here!”

There was a bustle of anxious activity and Michael felt himself gently lifted by several rough, but sturdy hands.

“Oh sweet Mother Mary,” the wounded man whispered to himself, “Please. What will happen to my family, if I go lame? Please... please help me.”

Despite the firm assurance of his uncle, Michael was right in saying how they had no money. He was rushed to the nearest hospital, but the nearest one that they could afford: the local hospital in Valencia.

And in time, despite the many remedies applied to the broken limb – it was evident that the medical attempts were without success. In fact, the ailment was only getting worse.

“It is a shame, my friend.” The doctor readily admitted. “He seems like such a good boy.”

“They don’t come any better,” said the uncle staunchly. A touch of bitterness crept into his voice. “It seems to me that God has worse men to punish. And what of Our Lady’s protection?”

“It is true,” agreed the doctor. “Young Michael seems quite devoted to Her. A day doesn’t go by that I don’t hear Her name on his lips.”

“He has great confidence in Her,” said the uncle. “In fact, he has been begging me to take him to the great hospital in Saragossa. He is sure Our Lady will help him there.”

“Saragossa? Ah, Our Lady of the Pillar.”

“Yes, Her church is there. His devotion to Her is remarkable. And, I must admit, there have been

many miracles there. Perhaps..." The old man paused, his eyes deep in thought. "Maybe I will take him."

The doctor nodded. "There is little more I can do for him here. And Dr. D'Estranga is an eminent surgeon. Between his skill and Michael's faith....?"

"Yes," A spark of hope flickered in the uncle's eyes. "There is a good chance of a healing. And Michael has been patient, but persistent, in making the pilgrimage. I'm sure Our Lady of the Pillar will hear his prayer."

The journey was hard for the wounded patient, but at heart, Michael was thrilled.

When they arrived, they went to bring him immediately to the hospital.

"No, wait." Michael said suddenly. "Bring me to Our Lady of the Pillar's crypt."

His companions looked at one another. "You want to go down to the underground chapel?"

"In your condition, Michael?" His uncle was shocked. "That is ridiculous. You are burning with pain as it is! Our Lady will understand."

"No! Please, uncle," the young man pleaded. "Bring me down there! We've come this far. Let me see Her sacred image atop the pillar."

"But your leg, Michael," the uncle insisted. "you are simply in no condition to –"

"I can do it!" said Michael. "What better way to prove my faith in Her. Mary will help me, Herself! I promise."

Arguments seemed to be useless, and the uncle saw that yielding was his only option. And so, carried down by his faithful friends, Michael was laid before the blessed and miraculous statue of his dear Mother.

There, in the silence of his devoted heart, Michael prayed. And much to his uncle's dismay (though at this point, it was hardly a surprise), Michael insisted to stay and hear Mass in the little crypt. First, though, he went to confession, then heard Mass and received Holy Communion. All this while, though, his leg was seething with pain, Michael confidently and unceasingly implored his Heavenly Mother for aid. He was confident of benefiting from the promise Our Lady gave, centuries and centuries ago, to help those who invoked her loving protection and assistance.

Then, with perfect resignation to the Divine Will, Michael was taken up to the hospital. There, he was placed under the care of Dr. John D'Estranga, who was at that time – one of the best in his profession.

"Good afternoon, gentlemen." The good doctor at last came in to see his patient. "I hear you have been down to the chapel of Our Lady of the Pillar."

"Yes," Michael smiled. "She is why we came."

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“Well, let me take a quick look at your leg”

“And your skill is renowned, Dr D’Estranga.” The uncle smiled, as the doctor approached the bed. “It is good of you to see us. My nephew’s condition has only worsened. We were hoping...”

His voice trailed off as he watched the doctor’s face. There was a look on his face that spoke louder than words. The heavy silence was at last broken by the doctor. His voice was firm... and anxious.

“We must act quickly,” said the surgeon. “His leg must be amputated at once.”

CHAPTER 2



Doctor D'Estranga knew his medical profession well, and it was without argument that Michael Pellicer yielded to his decision of an amputation.

Outside the operating room, the heavy-hearted uncle waited. His hopes had been crushed. All was lost. Our Lady of the Pillar had not healed Michael's leg.

Surely the Blessed Virgin could have at least obtained a natural, if not miraculous, healing? But no. In the other room, his pain-racked nephew lay on a hard table, with his wounded leg being cut off a little below the knee. Of what use were all of their prayers and devotion?

There is much suffering in a hospital, and all around one may hear the dull moans or piercing cries of the ill and the dying. For in those days there were not many ways to mitigate their physical pains. And yet, as he paused in his thoughts, the uncle realized that he heard no such cries from the operating room. Now and then, Michael's pained voice would suddenly call out. The first time he could decipher his words, a tear slipped down the man's old face. His nephew was crying out to Our Lady.

In the midst of what many might consider a betrayal to his faith and prayers, young Michael saw in his sufferings the will of God. He felt, in the depths of his confident heart, that since it had not pleased Our Lady to heal him, he must have merited his sufferings. He knew that, whatever it may cost him, She always would obtain what was best for his soul. Michael believed that. And no matter what anything seemed like - he would *always* believe that. He loved Her tenderly - and he knew that She loved him even more.

After the operation, Michael returned to Our Lady of the Pillar's shrine - this time on crutches. Before the miraculous image, the new cripple prayed. He prayed not for a cure, as the idle observer may have imagined, but in gratitude. He thanked his Blessed Mother for the strength and grace that the She had given him to endure his operation and accept the Providential Will of God. And truly, in the eyes of God - that is a greater miracle.

"Alms! Alms for the love of Our Lady!"

A handsomely dressed pilgrim dropped a few coins in the cripple's hat. "There you are young man."

"God bless you, sir!" was the thankful response. "May the Blessed Virgin protect you!"

The stranger nodded amiably and continued into Our Lady of the Pillar's Church. As he did so, a priest came walking out and made straight for the beggar.

"Take a little extra today, Michael. The weather is bitter cold."

"Oh Father, God bless you!" young Pellicer took and kissed the priest's hand. "Thank you very much."

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“Thank Our Lady,” the priest smiled. And blessing him he added “I think She watches out especially for you.”

“I am very blessed,” agreed the beggar. “She has many devout and generous children.” He spoke as a pious lady placed some alms into his hat. Michael nodded in gratitude and the woman smiled.

“You stay warm now, Michael.” she said, wrapping a shawl tightly over her head.

“Thank you señora, I will.” He waved goodbye as the priest and lady continued away from the church.

“He is a good man,” the priest said aloud, almost to himself. His companion agreed wholeheartedly.

“So devoted to Our Blessed Lady. He has been begging in front of Her church for how long? Two years, now?”

“At least. If not begging outside, he is praying inside,” nodded the priest. “What a hard blow for such a young man. He’s only twenty-one.”

“And so full of life,” the woman sighed and then added thoughtfully, “Yet one can hardly complain about his cross, when he himself is so patient.”

“He is an edifying example to us all,” agreed the priest.

His friend continued, “And yet it is a shame.”

“What is?” asked the priest, turning to her.

“Well, I’ve heard,” the woman said slowly, “That young Pellicer greatly desires to see his parents.”

“His parents?”

“Yes, they live in Calanda, I hear. But the poor thing has not the means,” she said sadly. “Well, maybe one day, he will. Oh excuse me, Father, but I think our roads part now. God bless you.” The woman nodded a goodbye and continued on her way.

Brief as it was, their conversation was a providential one, for the priest had been unaware of this simple, but strong desire of the pious beggar.

“God bless him,” thought the good priest. “Not a word of complaint, yet he hardly asks for anything! Hmm... you know there is that little mule I can spare. Well, I think, that Our Lady has a surprise in mind for her Michael.”

And what a surprise it was! Michael was overjoyed beyond words at the thought that finally, after two long years, he would be able to go back to his family. For one last time, he hobbled down to the sacred shrine. With a grateful heart, he bid farewell to his beloved Our Lady of the Pillar. He was thankful for the time he had been there, but he was glad now to go home.

The journey was not an easy one for the crippled beggar, but his needs were provided for by the alms

he received as he traveled through the villages. He would also stop and refresh himself along the way by visiting the different churches.

And at length, Michael Pellicer arrived, to the surprise and joy of his parents, at his home in Calanda. He had left a robust youth, and returned a crippled man. But to his father and mother, he was their son - and he was home. And such a reunion can only be imagined by those who have keenly felt the pain of separation from those they love.

“Michael? Is that you, dear?” Señora Pellicer called out as she heard the front door shut closed.

“Yes, Mother. I am back.”

Señor Pellicer sat upright. There was an unusual strain in his son’s voice. “Are you all right, Michael?”

“You sound very tired.” said his wife, quickly finishing his thought. Michael, leaning heavily on his crutches, carried himself to the fireplace, where his parents sat.

“I am a little tired,” he admitted.

“You look exhausted. Is something wrong?” His father asked. His mother stood up, worried.

“Here, sit down, son.” The woman gestured to the warm chair.

“No, nothing’s wrong.” Michael assured them. He turned to his mother, “Thank you, but I think I will go lay down instead.”

Señora Pellicer looked at him, “You are going to bed? It is only 8 o’clock.”

“He’s obviously tired.” defended Señor Pellicer.

“For some reason, I am tonight,” said Michael, as he placed his crutches by the fireplace. Then, with an effort, he smiled. “Really, I’m all right, mother.”

He was hardly fooling anyone, but Señora Pellicer suppressed her worries. “I will come in and check on you later. Just to make sure you are all right.”

“Well, if you want to hear me sleeping, by all means, pay a visit.” Michael said cheerily, as he hobbled off to bed.

Once in his room, he permitted a few painful sighs to escape him, as he dragged himself onto his bed. Wearily, he pulled the covers over himself as he lay down.

What a life lay ahead of him! Only twenty-one years old, and already he was weak and exhaustible, a burden to his parents. Certainly his devotion and piety was a consolation to them, but what apparent good did that do anyone? No matter how strongly one carries a cross, at a certain point, it is impossible to ignore its weight. And it is a truth that when the body is fatigued, the mind’s defenses are weakened. And it is at times like that, when the devil seeks to sow his seeds of discouragement.

CHAPTER 2

But by the grace of God and Our Lady, he did not find fertile ground in Michael's heart. Confidently, tenaciously, Michael adhered to his trust in the Blessed Virgin. He would *never* doubt Her love! Never distrust Her protection! If God created him to spend the rest of his life with one leg, then that is what he would do. And he would not lose heart! He would always trust Our Lady of the Pillar. She was his protectress.

Slowly, without realizing it, he fell into a deep sleep, and found himself back at Her beloved shrine. In his dream, however, he was thrilled to see that the miraculous image was alive. Our Lady of the Pillar, living and breathing, stood before him - surrounded, as she was in centuries past, by angels.

Michael's eyes met with Hers, and a joy beyond understanding flooded his heart. For in those eyes he saw Her love *for him*; a love that had been inflamed by his confident devotion *to Her*.

In gratitude, the angels, at Her word, gently approached him.

His consolation, though, ended all too abruptly - for he was suddenly awakened by the sound of his parents.

Opening his eyes, he saw that his mother, true to her word, had come in to check on him. Oh, but of all the nights to disturb his sleep!

"Oh, why did you awaken me from *so* sweet a dream?" he exclaimed. "It was so beautiful!" Without waiting for an explanation, he continued "I was in the holy chapel of Our Lady of the Pillar, and there, in the presence of my dear Protectress," Michael paused a moment. The memory was so consoling and so real. He turned and looked into the expectant faces of his parents. "Two angels came to me and... they restored to me my lost leg as a reward for my persevering confidence in our Blessed Mother."

To his surprise, his dream brought tears to his mother's eyes.

"Oh my son," she cried, her emotions choking her words. "Give thanks to God and Our Lady!"

Michael looked inquiring at his father, who also was filled with emotion.

"It was not merely a dream," Señor Pellicer exclaimed, "Look! You have two legs again!"

Quite taken aback, Michael sprang out of bed.

It was true. Our Lady of the Pillar had restored his leg to him.

Although it was quite past eleven o'clock, the neighbors, when they heard the cries coming from



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the Pellicer's home, rushed over to see what had happened. Quickly discovering the cause of their joy, they joined the good parents in their wish to render thanks for the miracle - and everyone conducted young Michael in triumph to the church.

It was the evening of March 29th, 1640. A little over a year later, the miracle was authentically published by the Archbishop of Saragossa, after a thorough and juridical examination. All the facts connected with the miraculous healing were attested to by many witnesses, and authenticated by notaries, professors, and surgeons.

Michael's miracle was complete. There only remained, as a testimony for the rest of his life, a bright red line around his leg.

Soon after the miracle, Michael returned on a pilgrimage of thanksgiving to the chapel of Our Lady of the Pillar. He had left there a crippled beggar, and returned a miraculously healed son - eternally grateful and forever devoted to his faithful, loving Mother.

The End

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