

What was it that Josette Poulain's healing was not known after the diocesan process of 1955

For a few more years the dossier concerning Josette Poulain's healing was put aside, pending, according to the canon law legislation of 1917, another healing to be considered as miraculous. A second favor was not officially presented, although in the various bulletins and news reports of the two Congregations founded by Father de la Mennais, chronicles of healings, as well as favors obtained thanks to the intercession of the Founder, were published continuously.

In 1978, the new Postulator, Brother Jean Le Bihan, took over the cause of the healing of Josette Poulain as part of the celebration of the two hundred years of the birth of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. He wrote to the Superior General of the Daughters of Providence of Saint-Brieuc, asking her to contact again the Sisters who were still living and had witnessed the events of 1955.

The Mother General, Sister Jean, responded to the request by providing the requested information. Then the Postulator wrote to his predecessor, Brother Potier, asking him to explain to him why the cause of this healing of Josette Poulain had not advanced (October 6, 1978).

The Postulator, Brother Le Bihan, finally learned that the cause had been handed over to the Sacred Congregation of Rites and that it had been submitted to three doctors for judgment. The result of this consultation revealed that Doctor Capocaccia had a favorable opinion; Doctor Sympa - despite a writing that was difficult to interpret - was inclined to the inexplicable character; and Doctor Scarafoni in a more detailed account concluded by saying that the evidence was not sufficient.

Faced with these rather encouraging judgments, the Postulator requested Brother Potier to explain to him why the procedure had been suspended. He replied: "*There is little chance that the case of Josette Poulain will go further, for the reason that too little time passed between the moment when the little girl lost sensitivity and the moment when she recovered it. The reaction of nature, with the help of the drugs we have continued to give, may be enough to explain the return of sensitivity*".

This judgment, as we can see, remained rather approximate in terms of a more rigorous reconstruction of healing. Indeed, the time between the accident and its resolution (*restitutio ad integrum*) was not four or five hours but at least eight hours. And no medication was given before the healing.

In fact, the former Postulator gives the real explanation for putting aside Josette Poulain's case. During the pre-preparatory meeting for the declaration of the heroic virtue almost all the voters had expressed themselves in a reserved way with regard to the pursuit of the cause, for the reason that we have already given, that is to say, the need to deepen the more delicate aspects of the life of Jean-Marie de la Mennais. Only, Monsignor Antonelli opposed this vote and entrusted to Monsignor Frutaz of the historical section, the preparation of responses to objections (*animadversiones*), the work that the latter wrote remarkably in the writing of the voluminous *Summarium Additionale*, also thanks to the help of Brother Hippolyte-Victor Géreux.

The *Summarium* demonstrated so clearly the heroic virtue which God's servant, Jean-Marie de la Mennais, had shown and manifested in dramatic and painful circumstances for his faith, his conscience and feelings.

Consequently, as the former Postulator explained, at the time of the proclamation of the heroic virtue, it would not have been appropriate to propose the examination of a cure without risking - in case it had not been recognized as unexplainable - to overshadow the cause itself.

This therefore explains the fact that the Josette healing dossier was put aside, pending the change of the legislation of the new Congregation for the Causes of Saints.