

The suddenness of God

How an instant cure saved me from death, brought new life into the world and paved the way for a canonisation

MELISSA VILLALOBOS

This year showed that seven words saved two lives. In fact, one of the saved lives went on to give birth to two more people. Thus, seven words gave life to four people. That is a lot of people who owe their lives to a handful of words.

As St John Henry Newman explained, our “words have a meaning, whether we mean that meaning or not; and they are imputed to us in their real meaning”.

I said the seven words from my heart, and meant them when I insisted: “Please, Cardinal Newman, make the bleeding stop.”

I reached out to him because I was alone on my bathroom floor bleeding profusely in my pregnancy while my four other young children were in the kitchen downstairs and my husband, David, was in a plane travelling for work. I asked Newman to save me because I knew he was in heaven and would bring my request directly to God.

I was pregnant with my daughter, Gemma, and was haemorrhaging from a detached placenta. Newman brought my request to God and interceded to cure me instantly.

As soon as I finished saying the words, Newman immediately filled the air with the most beautiful and intense fragrance of roses three separate times. It was far more extraordinary than the scent of any roses on the earth.

It is curious indeed how such ordinary words could be effective in saving lives and arousing heavenly scents.

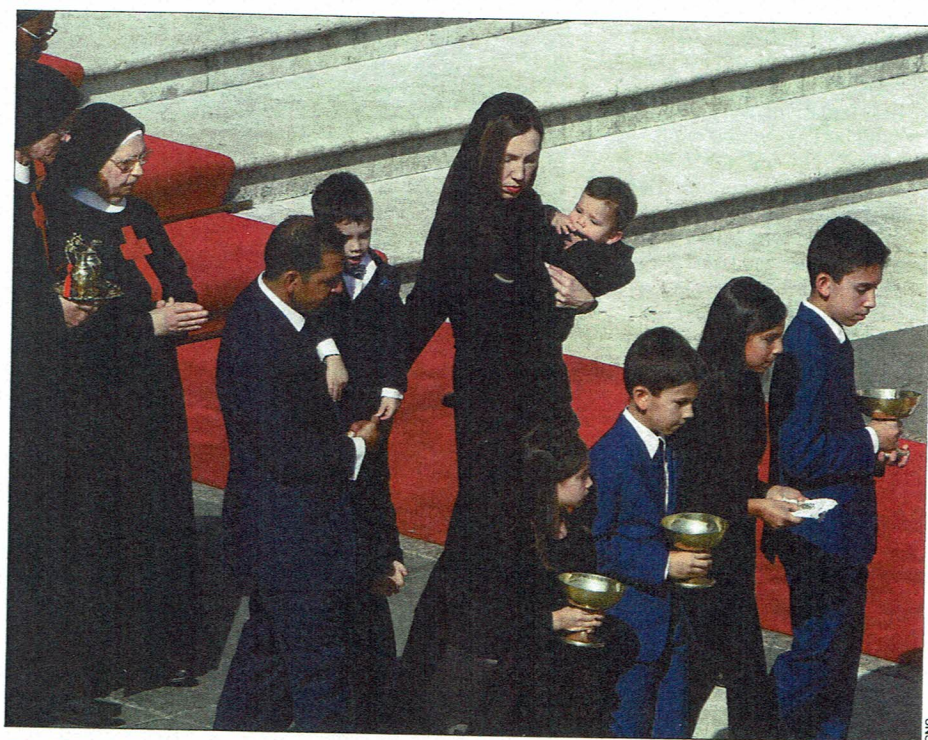
Newman said: “We do not know how it is that prayer receives an answer from God at all. It is strange, indeed, that weak man should have the strength to move God; but it is our privilege to know that we can do so.”

Newman has given us further insight that “it is faith that is the appointed means of gaining all blessings from God”.

What an immense privilege that I could have the strength to move God with ordinary words and an abundance of faith, and that He would condescend, in His mercy, at Cardinal Newman’s request, to help me.

As soon as I was cured, I was in awe that I had experienced divine assistance from the hidden world.

Newman said that the unseen world is real in that “there are two worlds, ‘the visible and the invisible’, as the Creed speaks – the world we see, and the world we do not see ...” He further explained that the world we do not see is “more wonderful than the



The Villalobos family present the offertory gifts to the Pope at the canonisation Mass

world we see ... though unseen, is present; present, not future, not distant. It is not above the sky, it is not beyond the grave; it is now and here; the Kingdom of God is among us.”

Newman’s roses smelled more wonderful, in fact, than roses I have actually seen. Newman felt more near, like my dearest friend, than many people I have actually known. The invisible world felt wonderful and present with such a goodness that could only come from God.

I could not wait to share the news with the entire visible world of my extraordinary cure from the invisible world, but first I had to tell David whose aeroplane was due to land any minute.

The phone rang, and I answered wondering how I would tell him that I had almost died, but not to worry because I had been miraculously cured by Cardinal Newman.

Should I start with the miracle or the almost died part? David was worried because only five days prior, I had been rushed to the hospital and was told the bleak

news of my doomed pregnancy, and how there was no medical treatment for my detached placenta.

I was ordered to take strict bed rest too, but David knew that I was at home caring for our four children who were six years old and younger. I said “Hello” and knew that soon thereafter our lives would never be the same.

After I said “Hello,” David said: “They have messed up my hotel reservation, and I do not have a place to stay tonight. If I rush over to another hotel I might be able to get one of their last remaining rooms so I only have one minute or I will have nowhere to sleep. Quickly, how is everything?”

I did not want to rush through the glorious news of my miraculous cure so I calmly told David that everything was just fine, not to worry, and to call me back as soon as he got settled with a hotel.

My peaceful demeanour concerned him, and in what seemed like seconds he called back with a hotel secured, and asked me what was really going on.

I told David everything, and he accepted all of it as true. We both had great anticipation

of the ultrasound I was already scheduled to have that afternoon, which we hoped would confirm what we believed.

That afternoon, after my babysitter came over, I went to my doctor's appointment, which confirmed what David and I suspected. To my doctor's amazement, there was no more bleeding, and no evidence of a detached placenta on the ultrasound. My doctor happily announced: "The baby looks perfect!"

I wanted to exclaim: "And how about that placenta!" I could not wait to tell David that the ultrasound showed that everything was indeed perfect.

Even though my doctor was delighted, he had me continue to come for previously scheduled ultrasounds for several weeks, to monitor everything carefully.

I enjoyed seeing Gemma grow normally in my pregnancy, and did not mind the extra visits, even though I knew in my heart that they were unnecessary. Although my doctor remained cautious for a while, I immediately resumed my life as an active mother.

In God's goodness, the extra ultrasounds after my cure actually established a powerful record of medical evidence which was carefully studied by the Church.

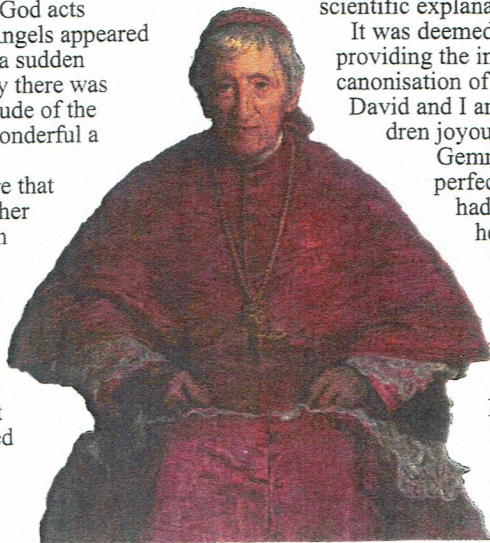
I had had many ultrasounds before my cure showing the partially detached placenta with blood actively spilling out, and now everything was suddenly perfect and remained so. Things had not gradually got better. In fact, they were getting much worse ...but then everything was suddenly perfect.

A sudden cure was outside the normal course of events. My doctor explained five days before my cure that, after many months of strict bed rest, it was remotely possible that the large wound from the ripped placenta could grow new cells and begin to reattach itself to the uterine wall and repair the hole that was allowing blood to escape.

Yet I was healed suddenly. The suddenness of my cure was compelling evidence of God's authorship.

Newman noted how God acts suddenly: "When the Angels appeared to the shepherd, it was a sudden appearance – 'Suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host.' How wonderful a sight!"

"The night had before that seemed just like any other night; as the evening on which Jacob saw the vision seemed like any other evening. They were keeping watch over their sheep; they were watching the night as it passed. The stars moved on – it was midnight. They had no idea of such a thing when the Angel appeared."



To live is to change,
and to be perfect is to have
changed often.

Fear not that life shall
come to an end but rather
fear that it shall never
have a beginning.
Growth is the only
evidence of life.



John Henry Newman

God reveals his power as He wills, and at times the invisible world suddenly becomes visible. God's kingdom is among us, although invisible, but in due season it is revealed.

The study of my cure revealed it to be not only sudden, but complete, permanent and without any medical or scientific explanation.

It was deemed to be a miracle providing the impetus for the canonisation of Newman, which David and I and our seven children joyously attended.

Gemma was born perfectly healthy, and I had two boys after her, and all of us were there giving glory to God. We had no idea that such a thing could ever happen to us. Before I was cured, we were like the shepherds minding their sheep before the

Angel suddenly appeared, and now there we were, honouring the one who was responsible for the lives of four people in our family.

After the canonisation, my family and I travelled throughout England, which I loved. We took the greatest delight in meeting the many people filled with the same devotion as ours.

We visited Newman's grave at Rednal, near Birmingham, to honour him and express our deepest love and gratitude, although we realise he "is not beyond the grave". We marvelled that he has gone from shadows into the truth, and from the visible to the invisible world, where he is just as real, and most powerfully and wonderfully so.

This time Gemma and I gave him roses, and we gently laid them on his grave. Just as I meant the words that I said to St John Henry Newman which resulted in my cure, I said seven more words from my heart to him again: "Thank you Cardinal Newman. I love you."

"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34).

Melissa Villalobos is a mother of seven living in Chicago