

Healing attributed to Mother Teresa

Miracle needed before nun can be beatified

Cindy Wooden/CNS

VATICAN CITY — Officials involved in the process to canonize Mother Teresa of Calcutta said they were confident that the healing of an Indian woman with an abdominal tumor would be the miracle needed for the nun's beatification.

In early October, the leader of the Science and Rationalists Association of India, as well as a former state health minister and director of the hospital where the

woman was treated for tuberculosis, claimed the healing was the result of medical treatment, not prayers to the founder of the Missionaries of Charity.

Vatican medical consultants had examined the woman's medical records and concluded there was no medical explanation for the disappearance of the tumor.

Sources said the consultants specifically considered whether medication used for treating her tuberculosis could have caused the tumor to disappear, and they concluded it could not.

A board of Vatican theological consultants said the healing was



Reuters/CNS

An Indian man holds a portrait of Mother Teresa in a procession marking the fifth anniversary of the nun's death Sept. 5 in Calcutta, India.

related to prayers for Mother Teresa's intercession.

The opinion of the two boards was accepted Oct. 1 by the cardinals and bishops who are members of the Congregation for Saints' Causes. In late December, Pope John Paul II is expected to order the publication of a decree recognizing the miracle.

Missionaries of Charity Father Brian Kolodiejchuk, promoter of Mother Teresa's cause, said Oct. 10 that until the decree is published "the miracle is still under study. When the study is completed, all the documents will be released."

Sources close to the Vatican congregation said Monica Besra's hospitalization for tuberculosis

occurred several months before the tumor was discovered.

When the tumor disappeared Sept. 5, 1998, the first anniversary of Mother Teresa's death, Besra was not in the hospital, but at a home in West Bengal state run by the Missionaries of Charity.

The woman was in such pain from the pressure of the tumor that she could not sleep. The nuns set a Marian medallion that had been touched to the body of Mother Teresa on Besra's stomach, and she slept. When she awoke, the tumor had disappeared.

Vatican sources said they were confident the pope would accept the miracle and set a date for Mother Teresa's beatification, perhaps as early as spring 2003.

Obituary

Jack Ritzenthaler; comptroller

John A. (Jack) Ritzenthaler, 80, former comptroller for the Diocese of Rochester, died Sept. 18, 2002.

A retired major in the Army Reserves and National Guard, he was known as one who did not say no. As a result, he was active in many organizations. He was past president of the Men's Club at Mother of Sorrows Parish in Greece, a board member of Alternatives for Battered Women, past local president and national vice president of the Institute of Management Accountants and a member of the LifeSpan finance board.

He worked as accounting supervisor for Delco Products, supervisor for American Standard, East Irondequoit School District busi-

ness manager and comptroller for Crestwood Children's Center.

Ritzenthaler is survived by his wife, Mary Ann; children, Mary Ann (James) Brady, John P., William (Diane), Kathryn Lanning, Frances (Dennis) Gallagher, Thomas (Karen); 11 grandchildren; a great-grandson; and several nieces and nephews.

His funeral liturgy was celebrated at Our Lady of Mercy Church on Sept. 21 with interment in Holy Sepulchre Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to the School of the Holy Childhood, 100 Groton Parkway, Rochester, NY 14623, or to VNS Hospice, 2180 Empire Blvd., Webster, NY 14580.

— Lou Litzenberger

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