

Contemporary Eucharistic Miracles

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There are three major contemporary eucharistic miracles that have been scientifically examined and found to be without natural or physical explanation (implying supernatural origin):

1. Buenos Aires, Argentina – 1996 – overseen by Archbishop Bergoglio (Section I).
2. Tixtla, Mexico – 2006 (Section II).
3. Sokolka, Poland – 2008 (Section III).

Websites having photographs of the hosts are cited in the sections below.

I. Eucharistic Miracle Buenos Aires 1996

A true Eucharistic miracle occurs at every holy mass when the priest utters the words of consecration and the substance of the bread is transformed into the substance of Jesus' body and the substance of the wine is transformed into the substance of His blood. However, this term is sometimes used to refer to extraordinary empirical signs of Jesus' presence in the Eucharist, most notably, bleeding hosts, or the transmutation of a consecrated host into a piece of cardiac muscle tissue. The first reported Eucharistic miracle of the second (rarer) sort – the miracle of Lanciano -- took place in the 8th century.

Eucharistic miracles are quite difficult to certify scientifically, because of problems certifying that the blood came from the host or that the transmuted flesh was originally a consecrated host. However, one notable exception to this difficulty occurred under the auspices of Pope Francis (at that time Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio) on August 18, 1996 in the Church of Santa Maria y Caballito Almagro in Buenos Aires Argentina.¹

On that day in the evening, Fr. Alejandro Pezet was told by a woman parishioner that a consecrated host had been desecrated on a candleholder in the back of the Church. Unable to consume the host, Fr. Pezet put it into a glass of water into the tabernacle so that it would dissolve (the ordinary practice for respectfully handling such a host). When he opened the tabernacle on August 26, he saw that the host had been transformed into a piece of bloody tissue which was much larger than the original host. He informed Archbishop Bergoglio of the occurrence, who asked him to have the host professionally photographed. This occurred on September 6, 1996. It was decided to keep the host in the tabernacle without publicizing it or its origin.

¹ See Mieczyslaw Piotrowski 2010 "Eucharistic Miracle in Buenos Aires" in *Love One Another!* http://www.loamagazine.org/nr/the_main_topic/eucharistic_miracle_in_buenos.html. For a summary of this article, see Aleteia website 2016 "Eucharistic Miracle Beheld by Pope Francis? A Polish magazine tells of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, and an event in Buenos Aires" in <http://aleteia.org/2016/04/22/eucharistic-miracle-beheld-by-pope-francis/>.

After three years, the bloody tissue had not decomposed (which is truly extraordinary and virtually impossible to explain through natural causation – particularly because no special attempt was made to preserve it). Since the original photographs revealed the complete lack of decomposition, Archbishop Bergoglio asked that the bloody tissue be scientifically examined. On October 5, 1999, in the presence of the Cardinal’s representatives, scientist Dr. Ricardo Castanon Gomez took a sample of the bloody fragment and sent it to New York for analysis.² Since Dr. Gomez did not want to prejudice the scientific committee who would be examining the tissue in New York, he did not reveal its source. A team of five scientists was assembled, including the famous cardiologist and forensic pathologist, Dr. Frederic Zugibe (author of many books on forensic pathology, deceased 2013³). Zugibe testified that:

The analyzed material is a fragment of the heart muscle found in the wall of the left ventricle close to the valves. This muscle is responsible for the contraction of the heart. It should be borne in mind that the left cardiac ventricle pumps blood to all parts of the body. The heart muscle is in an inflammatory condition and contains a large number of white blood cells. This indicates that the heart was alive at the time the sample was taken. It is my contention that the heart was alive, since white blood cells die outside a living organism. They require a living organism to sustain them. Thus, their presence indicates that the heart was alive when the sample was taken. What is more, these white blood cells had penetrated the tissue, which further indicates that the heart had been under severe stress, as if the owner had been beaten severely about the chest.⁴

What is so remarkable about this testimony is not so much that the tissue comes from the wall of the left ventricle, but that white blood cells are present in large numbers in it, requiring that the tissue be removed when the heart was still alive and pumping. This feature precludes a great number of possible scenarios of fraud which a critic might propose, for it cannot be thought that officials in the Church had authorized the torture and death of a male with AB blood type (the same as on the Shroud of Turin and the Facecloth of Oviedo), opened his chest while he was still alive (after torturing him), and removed the tissue from his beating heart. If this scenario is out of the question, then one must ask the origin of this tissue which came from the tabernacle where the desecrated host was stored (as witnessed by the physician who extracted it, Dr. Ricardo Castanon Gomez). How did a piece of non-decomposing cardiac muscle tissue from the wall of the left ventricle with significant numbers of white blood cells (which had penetrated the tissue) make its way into the glass inside the tabernacle where the desecrated host had been stored in secret by Fr. Alejandro Pezet? How did this specific piece of tissue (which could only have come from a live, tortured subject) make its way into the tabernacle? The major factors needed to avert the criticism of “pious fraud” are in place, because solid medical evaluation shows that the sample had not decomposed and cannot be obtained from a deceased subject (i.e., a cadaver). Short of the fantastic scenario mentioned above, this non-decomposing piece of tissue appears to be the result of a transmutation of a consecrated, desecrated host witnessed not only by Fr. Alejandro Pezet, but also by his Bishop, Archbishop Jorge Bergoglio (Pope Francis).

² Ibid. Aleteia website.

³ Wikipedia “Frederic Zugibe” in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Zugibe.

⁴ Ibid. Aleteia website.



II. Tixtla, Mexico – 2006

The Mexican case starts in October 2006, when Father Leopoldo Roque, pastor of the Parish of Saint Martin of Tours, invited Father Raymundo Reyna Esteban to lead a spiritual retreat for his parishioners. As Father Leopoldo and another priest were distributing Communion, assisted by a religious sister who was to the left of Father Raymundo, this latter one turns towards him with the “pix” containing the Sacred Particles, looking at Father with eyes filled with tears, an incident that immediately attracted the attention of the celebrant: the Host that she had taken to give Communion to a lady parishioner had begun to effuse a reddish substance.⁵

The host was secured, and the ecclesiastical authorities commissioned Dr. Castignon Gomez to initiate a scientific investigation of the host. Gomez had previously participated in the scientific investigation of the miraculous hosts found at the Church in Buenos Aires. The scientific commission included several scientists, physicians, and laboratories. The scientific research conducted between October 2009 and October 2012 came to the following conclusions, presented on May 25, 2013 during the course of an international Symposium held by the Diocese of Chilpancingo, on the occasion of the Year of Faith, and which saw the participation of millions of people coming from four continents.⁶

1. The reddish substance analyzed corresponds to blood in which there are hemoglobin and DNA of human origin.
2. Two studies conducted by eminent forensic experts with different methodologies have shown that the substance originates from the interior, excluding the hypothesis that someone could have placed it from the exterior.
3. The blood type is AB, similar to the one found in the Host of Lanciano and in the Holy Shroud of Turin. A microscopic analysis of magnification and penetration reveals that the superior part of the blood has been coagulated since October 2006.

⁵ “Eucharistic Miracle of Tixtla, October 21, 2006 *The Real Presence*
http://www.therealpresence.org/eucharst/mir/english_pdf/Tixtla2.pdf

⁶ Ibid.

Moreover, the underlying internal layers reveal, in February 2010, the presence of fresh blood.

4. A microscopic analysis of magnification and penetration reveals that the superior part of the blood has been coagulated since October 2006. Moreover, the underlying internal layers reveal, in February 2010, the presence of fresh blood.
5. They also found intact white blood cells, red blood cells, and active macrophages that engulf lipids. The tissue in question appears lacerated and with recovery mechanisms, exactly as occurs in a living tissue.
6. A further histopathological analysis determines the presence of protein structures in a state of deterioration, suggesting mesenchymal cells, very specialized cells, characterized by an elevated biophysiological dynamism.
7. The immunohistochemical studies reveal that the tissue found corresponds to the muscle of the heart (Myocardium). On account of the scientific results and the conclusions reached by the theological committee, last October 12 the Bishop of Chilpancingo, his Eminence Alejo Zavala Castro, announced the following:
 - The event does not have a natural explanation.
 - It does not have paranormal origin.⁷

In brief, the host has partially transmuted into heart tissue in which blood is effusing. The fact that the outer part of the blood has been coagulated since 2006 while the inner part of the blood is fresh, indicates that the tissue continues to effuse fresh blood (of AB blood type) which has no known natural explanation. Furthermore, the blood contains proteins indicating elevated metabolism in the person from which the tissue came, perhaps suggesting trauma. The blood also contains white blood cells, suggesting that the tissue is still living (or was removed from the body while alive). Thus, the tissue and the blood effusing from it resembles living heart tissue which has no known natural or physical explanation.

In view of the scientific evidence and the theological significance, the ecclesiastical authorities in Mexico approved this host as having supernatural origin. On October 12, 2013, H.E. Most Rev. Alejo Zavala Castro, Bishop of the Diocese of Chilpancingo-Chilapa, announced through a Pastoral Letter the recognition of the Eucharistic Miracle that occurred at Tixtla, on October 21, 2006. In the letter we read: “This manifestation brings to us a marvelous sign of the love of God that confirms the Real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist... In my role as Bishop of the Diocese I recognize the supernatural character of the series of events relating to the Bleeding Host of Tixtla... I declare the case as a “Divine Sign.”⁸

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.



III. Sokolka, Poland

On Sunday, October 12, 2008, during a mass at St. Anthony's church in Sokolka, Poland, a host was dropped by the pastor during the distribution of communion. The pastor gave the host to a religious sister (the sacristan) to place in a container of water so that it would dissolve and be reverently deposited. After mass, she placed the host in a container of water in a safe known only to her and the pastor. One week later, the pastor asked her to check the state of the host in the safe, and when she opened it, she smelled the aroma of unleavened bread, and then noticed that in the middle of the host was a curved bright red stain (see the photograph below). The water in the container was unaltered by the transformation of the host. She told the pastor who then showed the altered host to two other priests who decided to maintain discretion. The pastor then informed the metropolitan archbishop who also witnessed the transformed host along with chancery officials.⁹

On October 30, the archbishop asked that the host be removed from the container of water and placed on a corporal and put in a separate tabernacle in the rectory (see the photograph

⁹ *Aleteia* 2017 "The Eucharistic miracle of Sokolka: The host is tissue from heart of a dying man" September 23, 2017

<https://aleteia.org/2017/09/23/the-eucharistic-miracle-of-sokolka-the-host-is-tissue-from-heart-of-a-dying-man/>

below). In mid-January of 2009, the host had completely dried. The host was left in that tabernacle for two and a half years and was then transferred back to the Church in October 2011.

The archbishop then requested that histopathological studies be done. According to Aletea:

On March 30, [the archbishop] created an ecclesial commission to study the phenomenon. A piece of the altered host was taken and analyzed independently by two experts, Prof. Maria Sobaniec-Lotowska, MD, and Prof. Stanislaw Sulkowski, MD, in order to ensure the credibility of the results. Both are histopathologists at the Medical University of Bialystok. The studies were carried out at the university's Department of Pathomorphology. The specialists' work was governed by the scientific norms and obligations for analyzing any scientific problem in accordance with the directives of the Scientific Ethics Committee of the Polish Academy of Sciences.¹⁰

The results of the histopathological tests were remarkable. The stained part of the host was found to be a piece of cardiac tissue which was completely integrated into the bread part of the host. The completely seamless integration of the tissue part with the bread part is so refined that it appears that the tissue is growing out of the bread part of the host. During the analysis with the electronic microscope, the outlines of the communicating junctions and the thin filaments of the myofibrils were visible, showing that the cardiac tissue was joined to the consecrated Host in an inseparable manner. Indeed, the analysis showed that the integration of the two substances could not be produced by any known human technology.

According to Dr. Sobaniec-Lotowska, one of the examining experts, "Even NASA scientists, who have at their disposal the most modern analytical techniques, would not be able to artificially recreate such a thing."¹¹ Furthermore, the blood contains enzymes of a dying person. Aletea summarizes the results of the scientific investigation as follows:

When the samples were taken for analysis, the undissolved part of the consecrated host had become embedded in the cloth. However, the red blood clot was as clear as ever. This transformed part of the host was dry and fragile, inextricably interwoven with the rest of the fragment, which had kept the form of bread. The sample that was taken was large enough to carry out all the necessary studies. The results of both independent studies were in perfect agreement. They concluded that the structure of the transformed fragment of the host is identical to the myocardial (heart) tissue of a living person who is nearing death. The structure of the heart muscle fibers is deeply intertwined with that of the bread, in a way impossible to achieve with human means, according to the declaration of Prof. Maria Sobaniec-Lotowska. The studies proved that no foreign substance was

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See Jeanette Williams 2020 "The Amazing Science of Recent Eucharistic Miracles: A Message from Heaven? *Ascension Press*, April 13, 2020 <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2020/04/13/the-amazing-science-of-recent-eucharistic-miracles-a-message-from-heaven-%EF%BB%BF/>

added to the consecrated host; rather, part of the host took the form of heart muscle of a person near death. This kind of phenomenon is inexplicable by the natural sciences.¹²

The analysis by electron microscope is quite probative, showing that the tissue and blood in the middle of the host have no known physical (natural) or artificial explanation. This points to a supernatural explanation indicating the Catholic doctrine of the real presence of Jesus' body and blood in the transubstantiated host.

<https://aleteia.org/2017/09/23/the-eucharistic-miracle-of-sokolka-the-host-is-tissue-from-heart-of-a-dying-man/>



¹² *Aleteia* 2017 “The Eucharistic miracle of Sokolka: The host is tissue from heart of a dying man” September 23, 2017.