

# The “Miracle of All Miracles” in CALANDA

SPAIN, 1640

Young Miguel-Juan Pellicer had his leg amputated due to an accident. Thanks to his great devotion, the young man nurtured himself through the most Holy Sacrament and the Virgin of Pilar, a great miracle came upon him, which was immediately recognized and approved by the Archbishop of Zaragoza who presided over the canonic process. In his clear judgment he wrote that “Miguel-Juan Pellicer of Calanda was miraculously given back his right leg, which was amputated years prior and it was not a natural occurrence but a miraculous one”.



Sanctuary of the Virgin of Pilar, Zaragoza



Ancient painting depicting the miracle in the Sanctuary of Pilar



John Paul II pausing in front of the statue of the Virgin of Pilar, Zaragoza



Original document notarized by Miguel Andreu on April 2, 1640 certifying the miracle of Calanda



Pope Pio XII praying before the statue of the Virgin of Pilar that he received as a gift



According to the legend, the first chapel of the sanctuary was to have been built by St. James the Great around the year 40, in memory of the miraculous “coming” of the Virgin from Jerusalem to Zaragoza in order to confront the apostle who was completely disillusioned by the negative results of his preaching. The “Pilar” is in fact the Virgin who would have replaced his lower leg and foot.



**M**iguel-Juan Pellicer, born in 1617 to a poor family of farmers in Calanda, a village about 100 kilometers from Zaragoza. At 19 years old, he decided to go to work for an uncle near Castellon de la Plata. One day, on the job in the fields, he fell under a wagon full of grain and the wheels fractured his right leg. Miguel-Juan was immediately taken to the local hospital in Valencia. Realizing that it would be impossible for the doctors to cure him, he decided to discharge himself and begin a 13-kilometer trip towards Zaragoza to ask the Madonna of Pilar for help. He walked with crutches, leaning the knee of the fractured and now infected leg on a piece of wood. He reached Zaragoza in October 1637, waning and feverish, he dragged himself to the Sanctuary of Pilar, where he made his confession and received the Eucharist; he then immediately

recovered at Royal Hospital of Grace. Given the status of his gangrene, the doctors established that the only way to save his life was to amputate his leg, so the limb was cut off with a saw and scalpel slightly below the knee and cauterized with red hot metal.

*A young practitioner,* Juan Lorenzo Garcia, took the amputated limb and buried it in the cemetery next to the hospital. From that moment, Miguel-Juan was forced to beg for his livelihood near the Sanctuary of the Virgin of Pilar. Every morning he went to Mass and prayed with fervor before the Holy Sacrament. It was customary for him to oil his mutilated leg with oil from the tabernacle lamp. After three years away from home, he decided to return to his family that lovingly welcomed

him back. In March of 1640, after a vigil in honor of the Virgin, Miguel-Juan, feeling very tired, went to rest in his customary spot and as usual rubbed his leg with oil from the tabernacle lamp in the Sanctuary of the Madonna of Pilar. When his mother went to check to see if her son was okay, she saw him sleeping, and discovered that from beneath the blanket stuck out not one, but two feet. Miguel-Juan had miraculously recovered his lost limb, which was buried three years prior by the practitioner Mr. Garcia. According to the eyewitnesses present and the canonic process, “the leg was pale, smaller in size and muscular mass, but perfectly vital and allowed him to walk.”