

Malcolm



Archbishop of Liverpool

Statement on the Case of John Traynor

In August 1993, a front-page article in the *Catholic Pictorial* appeared under the banner: “Is our man a miracle?” It was a reference to the cure of John (Jack) Traynor at Lourdes in 1923, and the possibility that this cure might officially be declared miraculous. The article added that, “Ever since the World War I veteran was cured instantaneously and dramatically during the first archdiocesan pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady... many have believed unquestioningly that the event was miraculous.” Archbishop Derek Worlock added that, “There’s no question that people in Liverpool believe Jack Traynor was cured miraculously, and personally I’d have no hesitation in declaring the cure a miracle if the conditions are fulfilled properly.”

Despite the popular belief in Liverpool that John Traynor’s cure, from epilepsy, paralysis of the right arm and paraplegia, was miraculous, there had never been an official ecclesiastical declaration to that effect. Sadly, the 1993 attempt to reconsider the Traynor case floundered, as previous ones had done, because it was thought that there was insufficient contemporaneous evidence to establish that the cure of John Traynor could not be attributed to medical interventions or be explained according to medical science.

At the time of our centenary pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2023, the current President of the Lourdes Office of Medical Observations (BdCM), Dr Alessandro de Franciscis, asked Dr Kieran Moriarty, an English member of the International Medical Committee of Lourdes, to conduct a review of the file of John Traynor held in the archives at Lourdes. Dr Moriarty unearthed a reference in the file to a report by Dr Vallet, the then Acting President of the BdCM, which had been published in the *Journal de la Grotte* in December 1926. Dr Vallet examined John Traynor in July 1926, together with the three doctors (Drs Azurdia, Finn and Marley) who had

examined John Traynor at Lourdes in 1923, both before and after his cure. His report concluded that, “We recognise and proclaim, along with our Confreres, that the process of this prodigious healing is absolutely outside and above the forces of nature.” Dr Vallet’s report, which was published in French, appears never to have been sent to Liverpool, and indeed no potential miraculous cures were ever referred from Lourdes to diocesan bishops between 1913 and 1946.

Dr Moriarty continued his research in our own archdiocesan archives and elsewhere, assembling an extensive dossier of evidence, and in particular contemporaneous medical evidence, relating to the cure of John Traynor. This dossier was then sent to us by Monseigneur Jean-Marc Micas, the Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, over the summer. It was clear that there was now sufficient medical evidence to reconsider the possibility that the cure of John Traynor might be declared miraculous. Accordingly, I convened a canonical commission within the archdiocese to consider this case. This commission met here in Liverpool on 29th November, with both Dr Moriarty and Dr de Franciscis appearing as witnesses.

Given the weight of medical evidence, the testimony to the faith of John Traynor and his devotion to Our Blessed Lady, it is with great joy that I declare that the cure of John Traynor, from multiple serious medical conditions, is to be recognised as a miracle wrought by the power of God through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes.

I hope that in February 2025, during the Jubilee Year, we will have a fitting celebration at the Metropolitan Cathedral to mark this significant moment in the history of our archdiocese, helping us all to respond to the Jubilee call to be “Pilgrims of Hope”.

+ Malach O'Mahon OP

8th December 2024
Liverpool