

HEALING OF A TETRAPLEGIC BY SAINT NEKTARIOS

Mr. Stavros Kalkandis from Neapolis, Lakonia, Greece, was a permanent member of the Greek air force, serving as an officer. In the early months of 1941, during a military operation, he injured his cervical spine, and consequently developed hemorrhage within his spinal column. Thereafter, his condition gradually improved, but while in the Middle East he re-injured his spinal cord and suffered partial paralysis. In 1947 he was sent to a major hospital in New York City for treatment; however, instead of improving, his condition deteriorated. After four years, in 1951 he returned home to Greece in a wheelchair as a tetraplegic, completely paralyzed, no longer able to move his hands or feet. Despite numerous, subsequent trips to the United States, there was no longer any hope of improvement, and those entrusted to care for him admitted him to the Center of Rehabilitation for Disabled.

In 1961 he met the renowned spiritual father, Elder Philotheos Zervakos, then Abbot of the Monastery of Longovarda on the island of Paros. Elder Philotheos strengthened his faith, comforted his soul, and spoke to him about Saint Nektarios, whom Mr. Stavros had never heard of up to that point in time.

Mr. Kalkandis made his first visit to Saint Nektarios monastery on the island of Aegina, accompanied by Elder Philotheos, to ask for Saint Nektarios' help. Having acquired unshakable hope in Saint Nektarios, he visited the island several times thereafter. On account of his physical disability, however, he was never able to venerate the Saint's holy relics.

In 1971, one particular visit to the monastery with Elder Philotheos Zervakos, became the starting point of a miracle. During that visit, Mr. Kalkandis had a spontaneous, impelling desire to venerate the Saint's holy relics, which were guarded within a special reliquary case. At the request of Elder Philotheos, the Abbess gave permission for the reliquary to be brought to the paralyzed pilgrim. Mr. Kalkandis' brother attempted to lift the case, but he was unable to do so and assumed that it must have been bolted to the table. When the Abbess insisted that it was not fastened in any way, his brother and an accompanying soldier made a second attempt, and together with great effort they lifted the reliquary box, placed it on Mr. Kalkandis' lap, and then lifted and placed his

hands on the reliquary. After praying at length from the depth of his soul, Mr. Kalkandis returned to the Rehabilitation Center with the conviction and certainty that something extraordinary was to follow.

Nurturing this expectation within his soul for approximately ten days, he woke up one morning and said his usual prayers. Before the attending military personnel began the daily stretches and exercises on his paralyzed limbs, he sensed that something had suddenly been loosened from his body. Furthermore, he felt the need to stand up. He then said to his nurse Dimitri Skortsanidi and his personal driver Ioanni Hatzakis: "Gentlemen, help me please to stand up." The two soldiers initially stood dumbfounded at this request. But when Mr. Kalkandis continued adamantly insisting, they lifted him straight up from the wheelchair, and indeed, for the first time he was able to remain standing without his knees buckling, as before. With the assistance of these two soldiers, with great difficulty he took his first steps within his room.

On the evening of that very same day, in the presence of many others, he walked freely and unhindered in the chapel of the nursing home, chanting, "*Who is great like our God. You are the God Who alone works wonders!*" Not long after that, he returned to his house, and henceforth he was able to walk on his own unrestricted. In following, he devoted the remainder of his life to serving his fellow man, he travelled within Greece and abroad proclaiming the miracle he had experienced, and also built a church in his hometown dedicated to Saint Nektarios.