

TO: Father Anonio Cairoli, Postulator General for The Cause of
Blessed Battista Varani

During the first week of January in 1979, while on a regularly scheduled business trip to North Carolina, I called home on Friday afternoon before boarding my flight to see how Regina was feeling. According to her family doctor, Louis LaNoce, M.D., she was suffering from a case of walking pneumonia and was being treated with antibiotics. Dr. LaNoce ordered X-rays to be taken that past Wednesday and we were awaiting the results.

During our conversation, Regina said that Dr. LaNoce wanted to speak with me concerning her condition. I called him immediately from the airport lounge and was told that Regina had a malignant tumor located in the plural lining of the lung. His guess was Hodgkins Disease in the advanced stages. Dr. LaNoce came to this conclusion based upon the excess build up of plural fluid in the lungs; the size of the tumor and major organ involvement with the lungs.

Dr. LaNoce scheduled Regina into Roxborough Memorial Hospital immediately to confirm his preliminary diagnosis. She spent one week in the hospital undergoing tests under the auspicious of Dr. Thomas Gabuzda, an oncologist, recommended highly by Dr. LaNoce. The diagnosis was confirmed after the removal and biopsy of a lymph node under the right armpit and the extraction of bone marrow from her hip.

Dr. Gabuzda explained to us the procedure they use to determine how far advanced the disease had progressed. They use a grid system with a range of 1 to 5 with subranges within each category. The lowest range being the easiest to treat and control, while the higher range being the most difficult. Regina was staged as a 4A.

I was absolutely devastated at this news. My blood pressure was permanently impaired as a result of the stress. I called my employer and took off the entire week that Regina was hospitalized. During this week, I spent all the day time and evening hours at the hospital with her. Every evening when I went home during that week, I prayed to Blessed Battista Varani for one favor, i.e. no further hospitalizations, nor future involvements with this disease for Regina. In essence, a complete and total cure. We borrowed the relic of Blessed Battista Varani from Dr. Varani and brought it to the hospital where we prayed together for a cure.

The following week I went back to work. My mind was paralyzed. The only visions I had were those of Regina in a casket in the prime of her life. I prayed to Blessed Battista every day that week in the subway to and from my office and on the train to and from work.

Later in the week, I called Dr. Gabuzda's office and requested a straight forward analysis of Regina's condition and future prognosis. Dr. Gabuzda was very cautious with his remarks. He said, and I quote "there are good parts to this disease (Hodgkins) and bad parts, Regina has all the bad parts". He then gaged her chances of survival for 5 years at less than 50%. Dr. Gabuzda wanted to develop a program of treatment to begin immediately.

The following Monday, Regina and I went to Lankenau Hospital to begin treatment which Dr. Gabuzda would recommend after further examination. That day in the office, the doctor inserted a large needle through Regina's back into her left plural cavity and removed several large vials of plural fluid for analysis. He asked that I take this fluid, which was hot to the touch, upstairs to the research center for analysis.

During this examination Dr. Gabuzda said there is only one course of treatment for Regina's condition: Chemotherapy. He indicated that a certain percentage of patients did not respond at all to chemotherapy and if Regina did not respond it would eventually be fatal. Generally, he said, they treat Hodgkins Disease with a combination of chemotherapy and radiation for optimum result.

Regina could not be treated with radiation because of her mixed cellularity condition, i.e. cancer cells mixed with normal cells throughout her body vs monocellularity meaning a large self-contained tumor. Thus, her chemotherapy treatment began.

I prayed every day to Blessed Battista Varani for results. We saw results immediately. Within one week all fluid build up in the lungs (estimated volume - 2 quarts) was gone. Dr. Gabuzda expressed his amazement. Within 3 weeks the tumor was decreasing in size and within approximately 2 to 3 months all signs of cancer were gone. Regina was in complete remission.

Dr. Gabuzda expressed again his amazement at Regina's unusually quick and rapid recovery from this potentially fatal disease. He was particularly impressed with the fact that Regina had no further hospitalizations (as we prayed for) given the advanced stage of her illness. The doctor, however, did caution us not to be overly optimistic. He pointed out that this disease has a rather nasty habit of recurring within 1 to 38 months after treatment stops.

Regina continued on chemotherapy for about another 14 months, an unusually long period of time to be on such treatment, but Dr. Gabuzda wanted to insure the demise of every last cancer cell in her body.

Regina and I decided to vacation in Italy in July of 1979. She was still undergoing treatment at this time but Dr. Gabuzda gave his permission. We went to church in Castelnuovo which has a chapel and Shrine dedicated to Blessed Battista, donated by the family of Edward and Gemma Varani and American patrons dedicated to the Cause of Blessed Battista, to give thanks for Regina's progress and prayed further for complete, non-recurring recovery.

It was our decision to say nothing to anyone concerning Regina's cure. She was not out of the woods yet. Dr. Gabuzda feels sure now, after 46 months, that we will have no further trouble. We fully believe and dedicate Regina's cure from Hodgkins Disease to the intercession of Blessed Battista Varani.