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Miracle on the High Seas, A True Story: A Case of Faith, Heroism, Love, and Compassion

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Miracle on the High Seas

A True Story

A Case of Faith, Heroism, Love, and Compassion



— EMILIO IODICE, Rome, Italy

You must see the miracles for there to be miracles.

— Jandy Nelson

Miracles happen to those who believe in them.

— Bernard Berenson

It is absurd to say the age of miracles is past. It has not yet begun.

— Oscar Wilde

It was a perfect day.

The sun rose high in the east over the shore of Monte Circeo, a peninsula, 100 kilometers south of Rome.

It showered the small boat with rays of gold. The craft was new and beautiful and amazingly seaworthy.

The water was placid like a sheet of glass on a lake.

It was green with tints of blue and turquoise.

Michele, Tamara and their three-year-old were snuggled in the boat.



Michele loved it. He worked hard to raise the money to buy it.

It had a strong engine and a fiberglass hull. The vessel was sturdy and the motor sounded powerful and efficient.

The family embarked for the island of Ponza, the center of a horseshoe shaped archipelago named after Pontius Pilate who was governor in the time of ancient Rome.

It was the eve of the feast of the Assumption.

The vessel slipped along the water like a glider.

Michele was from Ponza. He was a skilled mariner and fisherman. He knew the sea like the back of his hand. Every rock, obstacle, wind and wave between the mainland and the island was written in his mind like a road map.

Tamara cuddled her child to keep her comfortable as the craft began to gently move along the waves.

The journey was peaceful and pleasurable. A warm breeze embraced the family and seemed to protect them from the elements.

Two hours passed. They could see Ponza in the distance. It rose like an exotic rock in the sea filled with colors and vegetation.

It was beautiful.

Like a bolt of lightning, the boat suddenly took on a cascade of water from the stern. The family was shocked as the vessel tilted vertically to the rear.

It began to sink. The weight of the motor seemed to drag it into the abyss.

Michele immediately thought of Tamara and his daughter. He dove into the water as it swallowed the boat. The weight of the motor dragged it 20 meters below the surface.

It sank ever deeper.

Michele swam into the heart of the craft with his eyes open. As the boat went into the depths, Michele struggled to keep up with it holding his breath for dear life.

He found two life jackets and grabbed the can of gasoline. He swam up searching for air and light. It seemed endless like a black hole in the universe.

He was afraid for himself and those he loved.

Finally, he reached the surface. He took deep breaths and looked for his companion and daughter. He found them ten meters away. They were treading water to stay afloat as panic, fear, and shock overtook them.

He put the life jackets on them and fastened them just as the boat disappeared into the waves.



Michele took a plastic tank filled with gasoline and emptied it into the surf. The petrol and oil covered his body.

His skin burned in the sun as the heat and fuel scorched him like a fire. The empty tank, placed snugly between his legs, buoyed him.

He stayed close to his family. He held Tamara's hand and embraced his daughter. No boats as far as the eye could see.

From Circeo to Palamarola to Ponza not the slightest sign of a sail, a mast, or anything afloat or the sound of a motor.

An hour passed. Nothing and no one.

Another hour and another.

The water sapped the warmth from their bodies. The baby's lips and face changed color. A tint of blue covered her cheeks and forehead.

She was drowsy.

Michele and Tamara were desperate and despondent. Death hung in the air like a sword about to strike. They huddled together tightly to face their fate.

"San Silverio help us," yelled Michele. "I have always believed in you. I have always been the first boat in your procession. San Silverio, please save us."

He screamed his prayer again and again with the hope that his patron saint would hear him. His voice echoed across the waves like a chorus of dolphins chanting in the surf.

There was nothing in sight for miles.

In what seemed an instant, across the horizon they heard an engine. Something emerged from the sea. It appeared like Neptune rising from the darkness of the ocean.

It was huge. It was thirty meters from the family.

They were dying. Minutes separated them from the end.



An 18-meter yacht moved in their direction. To Michele it seemed like an ocean liner. Tamara waved her life jacket so it could be seen. The owner of the yacht saw them.

It was an emergency. He reached the dying family. He took the baby first and gave her special care. Then came Tamara.

“Don’t worry about me,” cried Michele. “I can swim to shore but please save my family.”

The man on the boat was elderly with kind eyes. He raised his right hand and three fingers in a sign of love and peace. “I came to save all of you,” he said in a deep voice that rang out over the water as Michele was pulled into the yacht.

The mariner’s wife and two children immediately rushed to help the little girl and the parents.

The large craft had no crew. No words passed between anyone. Just acts of love, compassion, and care.

The Good Samaritans took them to Ponza. They were safe, reunited with their family and grateful to their savior and to San Silverio.

“How can I thank you,” said Michele to the owner of the yacht. He smiled and did not respond.

Michele asked his brother to record the numbers on the boat so he could look it up and send a message of thanks.

A cell phone was printed on the hull. The yacht slipped away. He searched for the registration with the Coast Guard. The vessel did not exist. He double and triple checked. Not a trace of the boat was found. The cell phone was silent. Michele was shocked and confused as images raced across his mind.

A yacht comes from nowhere to save them.

A man raises his hand with the same three fingers of San Silverio.

The owner brings them to safety without a word, a question, or a thought.

The yacht and the people vanished like spirits.

As the days became weeks, Michele was gripped by a supernatural sensation as he pieced together the parts of this amazing saga. “It was San Silverio,” said Michele as he told me his story. “The saint was the captain of that boat that appeared and disappeared. He saved me and my family and asked for nothing in return.”

It was the only explanation. The fisherman vowed devotion to his patron saint who he felt rescued him and the ones he loved. A few months later, their little girl was baptized and welcomed into the world of spirituality, faith, hope, and love.

The Age of Miracles is forever here.

We are the miracle of miracles. The great inscrutable mystery of God.

— Thomas Carlyle

There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.

— Albert Einstein

About the Author

Emilio Iodice

Emilio Iodice is an Educator, Diplomat, Senior Executive, Best-Selling Author, and Presidential Historian. He was the son of immigrants. Iodice received his BS from Fordham University, his MBA from the City University of New York, and was named to Beta Gamma Sigma – the honorary society of top business graduates. He conducted doctoral work at George Washington University in Washington, DC.



Iodice spent over four decades as a senior executive, an educator, and a university administrator including serving as a key official for several US Administrations, reaching the top ranks of the civil service and the US diplomatic corps.

He was among the most decorated officers in history with a Gold Medal for Heroism, a Gold Medal and Silver Medal, nominations for the Bronze Medal, and commendations and citations. He was Minister in key missions abroad and was named to the list of future Ambassadors. He was knighted by the King of Italy and received Medals of Honor from Spain and Italy. At age 33, he was named by the President to the Senior Executive Service as the youngest career public official to reach this distinction.

Before joining Loyola University Chicago, as its Director and Vice President of the University, he was Vice President of Lucent Technologies in charge of global operations. He taught at Trinity College and, after nearly a decade at Loyola, was awarded the title of Director Emeritus and Professor of Leadership. Among his best-selling books are: *A Kid from Philadelphia*, *Mario Lanza: The Voice of the Poets*; *Profiles in Leadership from Caesar to Modern Times*; *Sisters*; *Future Shock 2.0*, *The Dragon Brief 2020*, and *Reflections, Stories of Love, Leadership, Courage and Passion*. In 2017, his book: *When Courage was the Essence of Leadership, Lessons from History* was published and in 2019, the new edition was launched. Three new bestselling books were published in 2020 and 2021: *The Commander in Chief*; *The Return of Mussolini, the Rise of Modern-Day Tyranny*; and *Liberation*, which reached the number one bestselling status after one week and became a USA TODAY bestseller. Royalties from the sale of his books go to support charitable causes.

Iodice was recently named a Senator of the Royal Family of Italy. He is Director of the Scientific Committee of the Italy USA Foundation, a member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, and sits on the Board of Trustees of several educational institutions. He resides in Rome, Italy.

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