

A Life-Changing Experience for the Family of Demetrios and Aimilia Outos

A few years ago, we went through a traumatic and difficult ordeal as a family. By the Grace of the Lord, we already had four children, and my wife, Aimilia, was pregnant with our fifth child. The previous two deliveries had been by Caesarean section, which greatly complicated the progress of her final pregnancy. She had to take special care to avoid stress or lifting heavy objects, and needed a good deal of rest. This was difficult, since we had many children.



It was the afternoon of March 24, 2005, according to the Church Calendar. Aimilia was in the eighth month of her pregnancy and was experiencing severe pains. At 9:00 p.m., the Eve of the Feast of the Annunciation of the Theotokos, she called me unexpectedly, asking me to come home, since she was in acute pain.

I rushed home, and she told me that, as she had tried to lift up one of the children, she felt something sharp internally and was overcome by unbearable pain. We called her doctor, who told us to go to the hospital. She was gradually losing consciousness and was dizzy. We asked one of our relatives to look after our children and called for an ambulance. When it arrived, the paramedics took Aimilia out of the house on a stretcher, and we set off in haste. In the ambulance, Aimilia was in pain, and would grow dizzy and then cold. The minutes that passed by were critical ones, and we were in the utmost anxiety. After we finally arrived at the hospital, her doctor was promptly notified. The doctor on shift, Dr.

D., alerted the staff that it was an emergency and gave orders for the preparation of the operating room, requesting that blood be made available immediately in the operating room.

At that moment, the man in charge of the hospital admissions office, who knew me from Aimilia's previous deliveries, came up to me in tears and told me, "My dear fellow, your wife is in a very critical state. I have implored the physician Saints that you receive her back alive." Just then, my wife was rolled out on a gurney, accompanied by Dr. D., who told me very gravely: "My friend, your child is most likely not alive. Let us at least try to save your wife."

"Hasten, St. John"

We had a friend inform our spiritual Father, Metropolitan Cyprian of Oropos and Phyle, of the situation, asking him to bless Aimilia and pray for her in her difficult condition. At the time, the Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Annunciation had already begun. With evident emotion and with tears in his eyes, Metropolitan Cyprian fervently prayed to our Lord, and with great ardor besought St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, for whom he cherished especial love: "Hasten, St. John, to save Aimilia and the baby."

The situation was in God's hands. I was waiting outside the operating room. Feeling an intense need to pray, and overcome by various pangs of remorse, I implored God, the *Panagia*, and the Saints to overlook my faults and to heal my wife and baby. I also invoked the prayers of my spiritual Father, while beseeching the intercessions of St. John on their behalf. These were difficult hours. Relatives had arrived, and we were



all in anguish together. No one came in or out of the operating room, until a certain nurse, who was entering, said to me: “Your baby has been taken up to the ward for premature babies, but your wife is still in a very critical condition.” This gave me some joy and hope in the midst of my agony. Later, my anxiety having peaked again at the absence of news, I saw Dr. D. leave the operating room. I stopped him and asked him how things had gone. His reply was succinct: “God is great!” And without another word, he went down the steps and entered his office. That is when I truly calmed down.

Aimilia’s doctor then called me into the vestibule of the operating room and said: “You brought your wife to me dead! Now both she and the baby are fine. Her uterus had ruptured and the placenta had become detached. She lost a lot of blood, and it is a miracle that she is alive. As soon as she regains consciousness, I will call you. Right now, they are giving her blood and oxygen.” Coming out of the vestibule, I embraced my siblings with tears and told them of the good outcome.

My wife’s doctor called me back later, telling me: “Let’s go to see your wife.” We went up to her. She began asking repeatedly if the baby was alright. I told her, “The nurse told me that they took the baby up to the ward for premature babies and that she is fine.” She replied: “You almost lost me today...” We did not say much to each other; I stayed only five minutes, since she was in intensive care. Her doctor told me that she would be brought to her hospital room in the morning if the test results were satisfactory. I said goodbye to her and left the room.

“Do it for your children’s sake”

Before noon the next day, Aimilia was brought to her room, where she recounted the following to me:

“When I entered the hospital, I was in a terrible state. I felt that I was slowly dying. When the doctors were examining me, my blood pressure was 6 [i.e., diastolic pressure of about 42 in the American system] and my hematocrit was sixteen percent [38% is normal]. In a daze, I asked how the baby was, but nobody told me. I heard them saying that they did not hear any signs of life in it at all. I kept on asking, and they told me: ‘Never mind the baby. We’re trying to save you.’”

All of the nurses and doctors together were trying to find a vein in me to hook me up to the serum and anesthetic, but in vain, owing to my low blood pressure. Finally, the anesthesiologist chanced upon a very small vein and they began to prepare me.

“Upon entering the operating room, I felt panic, and saw all of them rush around me. They asked me various questions so that I would not lose consciousness. I was holding on with difficulty. My blood pressure had dropped to four and my hematocrit to thirteen percent. They were intensively trying to raise my blood pressure, but I was blacking out. No one was talking to me anymore; they had turned their attention to keeping me alive. I could not bear it any longer, however, and said, ‘So long, folks, I cannot talk to you any longer or keep my eyes open. I am finished; save my child,’ and I closed my eyes. I do not know if they heard me.

“I then felt that I was no longer in my body or on the bed, but I saw and heard the doctors from above. One of them began shouting, ‘We’re losing her! Get her to respond.’ I called out to them, ‘I cannot respond. Save the baby; I am dead.’ When I had repeated this a second time, I felt someone touch my cheek—there where I was, in the air—and heard a gentle voice telling me, ‘How can you not? Do it for your children.’ I thereupon found myself back in my body and my eyes opened. I felt as if something were keeping them open mechanically. I was once again on the operating table. The doctors shouted, ‘She opened her eyes!’ One of the nurses put her stethoscope on my belly, heard the baby responding, and said ‘I heard it.’ The baby that they had given up on from the beginning was now ready to be delivered.

“The anesthesiologist bent over me and said, ‘Take a deep breath. We might be able to save the baby.’ They put the mask on me and put me under. The operation began.

“After the operation, I awoke in intensive care. A doctor took my hand and said:

“‘You scared us; you must have gone to the other world and returned.’

“‘I *did* go, doctor, and returned,’ I replied.

“‘You were aware of that?’ he asked.

“‘For my part, doctor, I was aware of it. How about you?’

“Light a candle as big as you in gratitude for being alive, because it is a miracle that you are alive.’

“Our Lord performed His miracle: He had returned us both to life.”

“It is a miracle that the baby is alive...”



The next day, I [the father] went by myself to see the baby girl. As I gazed on her, I thanked God for His benefaction to us. The pediatrician who had been present during the operation and who had now taken the baby under his charge approached me and asked: “Are you the father?” “Yes,” I replied. “Go and light a candle; it is a miracle that the baby is alive. When they brought her to us, she had turned blue and was no longer breathing. I decided

I would try to resuscitate her for ten minutes and see what happened. We massaged her and gave her oxygen, but in vain. She did not come back to life; she must have already been in that condition for some time. Our last hope was to give an adrenaline injection in the heart. But before we did so, the baby came to. It is a miracle that that baby is alive,” the doctor repeated again.

Aimilia’s good progress...

One of the doctors who was attending to my wife told me: “She is progressing very well. Everybody has five liters of blood, and your wife had lost four. I can say that she is doing better than I had expected.” Aimilia’s own doctor hugged her repeatedly: “I will never forget

this day,” she told her.

“What Saint was with you?”

When Aimilia had left the maternity ward and we had thanked her doctor, we went to Dr. D., the doctor on shift who had undertaken her case.

We waited for him to finish with the patients he was examining and entered the waiting room of his office. His shift was over and he would not be examining any more patients. When he saw us, he glanced at the clock; it was clear that he did not recognize us. I said to him:

“Doctor, we came to thank you.”

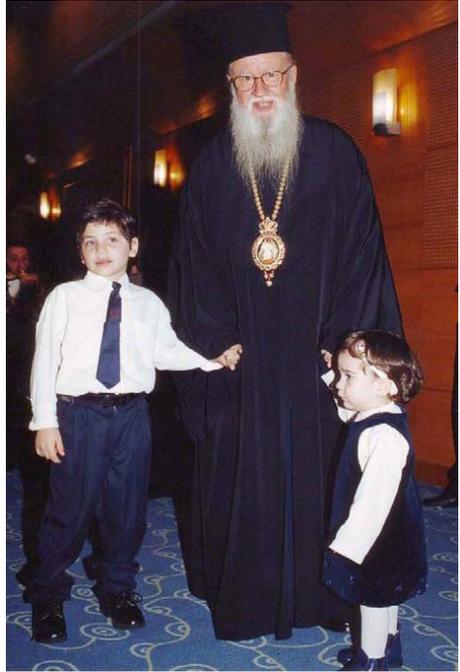
He looked at us in perplexity. I said to him, while pointing to Aimilia:

“She is Thursday’s special case.”

He then looked carefully at Aimilia and said to her:

“What Saint was with you that evening, my dear? You scared us all; we were literally all over you. One doctor was trying to raise your blood pressure, while another was examining you. It is a miracle that you and your baby are alive.”

The direct and vital intervention of God in the health of Aimilia and the baby was repeatedly confirmed by various doctors. I visited our baby girl every day during visiting hours. Owing to the difficult delivery, she was in constant need of oxygen support. The doctors still considered her condition to be critical. At our spiritual Father’s exhortation, we baptized her by air and named her *Evangelia*, in honor of the *Panagia* [the All-Holy Mother of God], who had granted



her life on the Feast day of the *Evangelismos* [Annunciation]. When I went to see her the next day, she was no longer in need of oxygen support and her condition was steadily improving.

Most Reverend spiritual Father, our gratitude to you is inexpressible. Through your prayers to the Lord, to His Most Holy Mother, to St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, and to all of the Saints you love, my wife and our fifth child are alive today. We thank you.

The family of Demetrios Outos

