



The death and the miracles of brother Fabian of Christ: connections between religious beliefs and healing in eighteenth-century Rio de Janeiro

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Abstract

Based on accounts of a hagiographic nature on brother Fabian of Christ and witness reports by the faithful after his death, this article analyzes the representations surrounding the death of the servant of god and studies the connections between the veneration of saints and healing practices in Rio de Janeiro in the mid-eighteenth century. At this time, there was a notable lack of distinction between medical knowledge and religious belief. As such, the zealous acts of the Franciscan friar over a period of decades in his work as infermarián at the Convent of Saint Anthony of Rio de Janeiro led some of the faithful to identify him as a saint after his death.

Keywords: sanctity; cure; miracles; relics; hagiography.

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Of all the inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, who enjoyed the reputation of sanctity in the eighteenth century, surely the most prominent was the Franciscan friar Fabian of Christ (Fabiano de Cristo). According to the authors who recorded eyewitness accounts of his activities, Fabian was originally from Soengas, in the parish of São Martinho, in the county of Guimarães, arch-diocese of Braga, Portugal. Son of Gervásio Barbosa and Senhorinha Gonçalves, he was born on February 8, 1676, the day on which the catholic church celebrates Saint John of Matha, founder of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity (Vauchez, 2000, p.1335-1336). For this reason, according to the chronicler and Franciscan monk Apollinaris of the Conception, he was baptized João Barbosa. Apart from him, the two agricultural laborers had five daughters. Socioeconomically, the family had “moderate wealth” (Conceição, 1748, p.4; see also Castro, 1944, p.7-16; Sinzig, 1928, p.7-9). One fine day, João Barbosa set off for Brazil, where he worked as a tradesman on the route to Minas Gerais.

His chroniclers recount that in 1704, when he was living in the town of Paraty, two events conspired to make him join the Franciscan order: the temptation proffered by a “woman of ill repute” and the news of the murder of his business partner. This decision was preceded by the donation of material goods to places of worship at his birthplace. Official records have his date of entry to the Franciscan order as November 11, 1704, where he joined the Convent of Saint Bernardine in the town of Angra dos Reis. Having completed his novitiate, he made his solemn profession a year later, on November 12, changing his name to Fabian of Christ (Conceição, 1748, p.4-8; Castro, 1944, p.28-44; Sinzig, 1928, p.9-12). Within the order, Friar Fabian was a lay brother, with responsibility for manual labor in the monasteries. This nomenclature was used to differentiate the brothers from the clergy. The lay brothers, “for lack of study, may not receive the holy orders” (Castro, 1944, p.33).

In late 1705, on the determination of the Franciscan prelate of the province of the Immaculate Conception, brother Fabian of Christ was transferred to the Convent of Saint Anthony, in Rio de Janeiro, which was the head monastery for the whole province (Röwer, 1957, p.47-48). According to the aforementioned chroniclers, brother Fabian of Christ was doorkeeper for this monastery for some three or four years. As the province’s statutes reveal, the choice of a newcomer to hold this position was not common, since “no religious man be appointed doorkeeper save those of great prudence, trust, and virtue; and in the great houses there will always be religious men who have been prelates and will at least be confessors of lay persons” (Chagas, 1717, p.48). Brother Fabian’s exceptional qualities apparently prompted his superiors to overlook the seniority requirement for the position of doorkeeper (Castro, 1944, p.48-49). Alongside responsibility for opening and closing the monastery’s door, the doorkeepers were required to perform charitable acts: “with the poor act with great charity, being greatly solicited to gather everything possible for the donation bowl, available for them, for none (may be) turned away forlorn, and when there is nothing to give, hearten them with words of compassion” (Ressurreição, 1708, p.496). According to the Franciscan chronicler Apollinaris of the Conception, brother Fabian shared with the poor “not just what the Community sets aside for such succor ... but also most of his food, and whatever else he could acquire from the faithful to help the needy” (Apolinário da Conceição, 1748, p.16).

In around 1709, brother Fabian of Christ was appointed as the infermarian of the Convent of Saint Anthony (Convento de Santo Antônio) of Rio de Janeiro, a position he held for 38 years until his death, in 1747 (Conceição, 1748, p.10). The demands for any holder of this position were considerable. According to the statutes, the provincial official, responsible for making the appointment, should select “religious men of great virtue, and charity and modesty for this effect” (Chagas, 1717, p.164). The infirmary at Convent of Saint Anthony did not just serve the members of its own community, but those from all the monasteries in the province:

and although in some convents the infirm cannot be readily healed, either for lack of surgeons or of necessary remedies, it is ordered that the friars of the Convent of Ilha Grande, Cabo Frio, and São Boaventura of the Village of St. Anthony of Sá, in the case of dangerous maladies and those in need of physicians and surgeons, should come to be treated at the Convent of St. Anthony (Chagas, 1717, p.163-164).

In 1719, shortly after brother Fabian’s appointment to the monastery’s infirmary, the Franciscan province of Rio de Janeiro had 251 friars. In contrast, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, at his monastery alone there were 120, 70 of whom were priests (Castro, 1944, p.35-47). According to the statutes of the Franciscan province of Rio de Janeiro, infermarians at the monasteries should also work for the salvation of the souls of the patients who were under their care: “the infermarian shall have very particular care and vigilance in having the infirm confess and receive communion upon their third bleeding” (Chagas, 1717, p.164). As portrayed by the Franciscan chronicler, brother Fabian of Christ was conscientious in following these recommendations: “in the treatment of the infirm he was zealous in his charity, providing prompt assistance, without fear of the most contagious malady ... and when he saw that they would inevitably perish from the infirmity, he turned to the Divine Tribunal, beseeching God to grant the infirm a happy death” (Conceição, 1748, p.16-17).

In his work as doorkeeper and especially as the infermarian of the Convent of Saint Anthony, brother Fabian of Christ seems to have garnered certain popularity amongst the faithful of Rio de Janeiro. It would seem, from the chronicler’s descriptions, that the convent infirmary’s expenses were at least partly covered by followers of brother Fabian: “I know the devotion that all bestowed on him, so much that liberally was the infirmary provided and succored with all it needed, like vestments, bed linen, and food, and everything else in the way of Remedies, which every year went there from Lisbon, at no expense to the Community” (Conceição, 1748, p.26; 1754, p.591). Likewise, “sent by obedience to beg in the town for alms for some necessary works, and other things of considerable expense, one errand of his was worth more than that of other religious men, even those of a more senior rank” (Conceição, 1748, p.26).

After his death, on October 17, 1747, there came to the attention of the superiors in the province of the Immaculate Conception several prodigies on the body of brother Fabian, as well as news of cures and other supernatural occurrences reported by devotees who had solicited his intercession. In view of this, brother Domingos of the Rosary, inspector-general of the province, appointed, on March 3, 1748, brother Joseph of the Angels to take down “with diligence and care all legal and authentic information of the marvels and favors

that God, with his mighty hand, is doing, through the intercession of his aforementioned servant Br. Fabian of Christ, and we appoint for your scribe and notary the brother confessor Br. Anthony of St. Catherine of Siena” (Moraes, 1867, p.215).

The first objective of this paper is to examine the reports surrounding the death of brother Fabian of Christ, associating them to religious conceptions at the time as well as the conventions of hagiographic narrative. The second and most important objective is to analyze the 29 witness statements supplied by different devotees to the friars Joseph of the Angels and Anthony of Saint Catherine of Siena, taken after brother Fabian’s death. These statements were included in a local judicial inquiry (informative phase) conducted by the Franciscan friars with the permission of the diocesan bishop, father Anthony of the Desert. If this ordinary process was successful, it would proceed to the jurisdiction of the Holy See in Rome, becoming an apostolic process. Between 1588 and 1969, this kind of legal instrument was produced in the Sacred Congregation of Rites, which would hear new witnesses, the considerations of the proponents of the cause, and the rigorous inquiries of the promotor of the faith. If it was proved that the “Servant of God” bore “Christian values to a heroic degree or died as a martyr, he would earn the right to be called ‘Venerable’” (Woodward, 1992, p.81). The next steps constituted the recognition of the beatification and canonization, both controlled by the pope and which, to be valid, depended on the recognition of miracles worked by the intercession of the Servant of God (Ditchfield, 2007, p.201-224; Po-Chia Hsia, 2005, p.127-143; Weinstein, Bell, 1982, p.141-150).

In the case of brother Fabian of Christ, there is no information about the existence of an apostolic process. There are only the 29 aforementioned witness statements, which presumably formed the kernel of the ordinary process for the recognition of sanctity. The 29 witnesses listed by the two Franciscan friars after the death of brother Fabian; the letter of appointment written by the inspector-general of the province of the Immaculate Conception appointing the two friars; and two documents signed by the highest authorities in Rio de Janeiro at the time, Governor Gomes Freire de Andrada and the diocesan bishop, father Anthony of the Desert, were recorded first in the Convent of Saint Anthony sacramental records. A complete copy of these sources was made in the nineteenth century by Alexandre José de Mello Moraes, and it is this that served as the basis for the analysis (Moraes, 1867, p.214-263; 1868, p.23-150). Partial copies of certain documents, particularly the letter of appointment and the statements by the governor and bishop, were also compiled by other chroniclers (Conceição, 1754, p.598-599; Macedo, 2004, p.239-242; Sinzig, 1928, p.30-41; Castro, 1944, p.181-189).

Just one part of the cited documentation has been explored by recent historians looking into the trajectory of brother Fabian of Christ, linking it to religious belief at the time (Mott, 1993, p.226-236; Oliveira, 2011, p.45-68). Nonetheless, neither of these authors aimed to analyze the death and the miracles of brother Fabian. Meanwhile, except for the studies about the Jesuit priest José de Anchieta, canonized by the catholic church in 2014 (Viotti, 1996; Fleck, 2015), the analyses of the Servants of God who died with a reputation of sanctity in Portuguese America have made little use of the ordinary or apostolic processes. The documents reporting the testimony of the 29 witnesses to the supposed miracles operated by the intercession of brother Fabian of Christ give us privileged access to the

relationships between religious beliefs and healing in colonial times. This connection is already observed in general terms in the research by Márcia Moisés Ribeiro (1997). Meanwhile, the studies by Vera Regina Beltrão Marques (2003, p.163-195) and Márcio de Sousa Soares (2001, p.407-438) relate the curing of disease to the veneration of saints, but focusing on cults officially sanctioned by the church. Related to the topics of interest here is Jorge Victor de Araújo Souza's (2013, p.537-552) study of the diseases and death rites at the monastery of Saint Benedict in Rio de Janeiro during colonial times.

Essentially, by analyzing the testimony of the 29 witnesses to supposed miracles after the death of brother Fabian of Christ and secondary sources mentioned in due course, it is hoped that a picture can be sketched out of the diseases that could be cured thanks to the intercession of the Servant of God in question, or with recourse to relics of said Servant, according to religious beliefs at the time.

Characterization of the sources

The analysis cannot be pursued without first detailing the sources that serve as a basis for the reconstitution of the trajectory of brother Fabian of Christ and the supposed miracles after his death. So far, the authors of these sources have been identified as chroniclers, but this is not detailed enough for the purposes of this study. Herein lies the importance of contextualizing the output of the different discourses about the Franciscan friar who passed in 1747. One of the key works is by brother Apollinaris of the Conception (1692-1760), a Franciscan lay brother, which means he had not received the priesthood, just like brother Fabian of Christ. Even though by rights he was only qualified to do simple, manual tasks, brother Apollinaris made a name as a chronicler of the Franciscan province of the Immaculate Conception of Rio de Janeiro, for which he was officially appointed in 1740 (Palomo, 2014, p.111-137). In his copious writings, he refers most directly to two books focusing on the activities of brother Fabian: *Eco sonoro da clamorosa coz* ("Sonorous Echo of the Clamorous Blow") (Conceição, 1748), and *Pequenos na terra, grandes no céu: memórias históricas dos religiosos da Ordem Seráfica, que no humilde estado de leigos subiram ao mais alto grau de perfeição* ("Small on the Earth, Great in Heaven: historical memories of the religious of the Seraphic Order, who in the humble state of laymen ascended to the highest degree of perfection") (Conceição, 1754, p.588-609).

As the subtitle of the second work indicates, brother Apollinaris was keen to highlight the glorious deeds of lay brothers, including those from his own province of the Immaculate Conception of Rio de Janeiro. In this sense, the two writing are based on the rationale of the hagiographic narrative, namely, that they are not biographies in the contemporary sense, but "lives" of men who died with a reputation of sanctity (Fernandes, 1999). From their birth, brother Fabian of Christ and other Franciscan friars are spoken of as if they were destined to become saints. Since the beginnings of Christianity, narratives of the lives of saints have followed clear, stereotypical conventions modeled on the life of Christ himself (Vauchez, 1989; Sánchez Lora, 1988). As such, in most of the lives of saints, there is a moment of "conversion" of the Servant of God, which, in the narratives about brother Fabian, corresponds to the time he was lured into temptation by a woman and the killing of

his business partner. These two temptations could be seen as *exempla*. As of the thirteenth century, the narratives of lives of saints incorporated a distinct genre, the *exemplum*, which, deriving from the sermons preached in the cities by the mendicant orders, could be defined as a short edifying narrative taken as truthful and close to orality, designed to persuade the audience of faithful (Franco Jr., 2006, p.13-14; Schmitt, 1999, p.144). As of his conversion, the life of the Servant of God becomes an accumulation of wondrous deeds.

The lives of Servants of God would end with a glorious death or, better still, would represent the victory of life over death, signs of which were an agreeable odor emanating from the cadaver, the suppleness of the body, and the continuous miracles worked through the intercession of the Servant of God or with the use of his relics. In the accounts of brother Fabian published by brother Apollinaris of the Conception, the proximity of the dates of publication of the two works – 1748 for *Eco sonoro*, and 1754 for the fifth volume of *Pequenos na terra* – to the death of the Servant of God (October 1747) is notable, especially given the restrictions on the production of printed matter at the time. This indicates a strategy to promote the sanctity of brother Fabian of Christ, whose formal recognition could be achieved by opening an apostolic process of beatification – something that has not occurred to this day (Menezes, 2004, p.193). Essentially, even though the accounts recorded by Apollinaris of the Conception constitute irreplaceable sources for discovering about the activities of brother Fabian of Christ, it must be borne in mind that they were produced with the clear intention of promoting the worship of the aforementioned Servant of God.

The same procedure can be found in the Franciscan chronicles in the twentieth century concerning the trajectory of brother Fabian of Christ. During colonial times, relations between the Portuguese crown and the catholic church were underpinned by the regime of the protectorate, marked by the official nature of catholicism and a royal commitment to expand and materially sustain the catholic religion (Marcocci, 2012, p.369-453). As of the rule of Joseph I (1750-1777), several measures changed the guidelines of this relationship. In the second half of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, devotion to Friar Fabian of Christ seems to have fallen by the wayside in a context marked by the closure of the novitiates to the entry of new religious, dictated by the authority of the crown and, as a result, the usage of the Convent of Saint Anthony to accommodate the seventh Infantry Battalion (Röwer, 2008, p.193). In republican times, with the end of the protectorate, the province of the Immaculate Conception was restored and allowed to receive new novices. It was in this context that, in February 1924, Fabian of Christ's tomb was discovered (Castro, 1944, p.208-209). In that same year, the first edition of the account of brother Pedro Sinzig about brother Fabian came out, which was not available for consultation; only the second edition was used (Sinzig, 1928). In 1930, the first edition of the work of the Franciscan João José Pedreira de Castro was published, which was consulted in the National Library, in Rio de Janeiro, and found to contain little difference from the 1944 edition (Castro, 1944). Both these works are connected when it comes to the aim of again promoting the cause of brother Fabian of Christ, gathering for this purpose up-to-date information about the miraculous cures wrought by him (Sinzig, 1928, p.51-65; Castro, 1944, p.211-214). All the sources referred to here should be read from a more critical perspective, for alongside the adoption of the codes of hagiographic writing, they were also produced in response to institutional initiatives and

their authors were themselves members of the Order of Saint Francis, with a vested interest in promoting the veneration of brother Fabian of Christ.

The final group of sources to be mentioned here are the 29 witness statements of cures and other miraculous deeds observed in Rio de Janeiro in 1748, a few months after the death of brother Fabian. Unlike the conventions of hagiographic writing seen in the narratives of his life, the testimony given to the friars Joseph of the Angels and Anthony of Saint Catherine of Siena were based on legal forms. Each witness was asked to give their status or occupation, their dwelling place, and their age. Then, after swearing with their right hand on the gospels, they were asked “whether they knew that Our Lord had bestowed some mercy on someone through the intercession of his Servant, Br. Fabian of Christ.” After the account of the miraculous benefit received through his intercession, the witness was then generally asked “whether, after invoking the Servant of God to give aid, any natural remedies had been applied to counter the malaise.” Another question then asked was whether the intercession of some other saint had been invoked in the form of a promise, which might have led to the disease being cured. The friars also asked whether the disease had resulted from witchcraft or the presence of the devil (Moraes, 1867, p.216). Together, these three questions were designed to find out whether brother Fabian of Christ could actually be considered the intercessor of the miraculous cure, ruling out all other potential agents. The witnesses were also asked whether they knew anyone who had heard of said miracle, and if they were aware of other benefits wrought by the Servant of God. At the end, the statement was read out to the witness, who, if he/she knew how to write, would then sign it. Summing up, the 29 witness statements supply different information on the miraculous cures worked by brother Fabian of Christ between March 11 and July 5, 1748.

The death of brother Fabian

As the miraculous cures obtained through the intercession of brother Fabiano took place after his death and often with recourse to relics – personal belongings – it is necessary to analyze the ramifications of these last hours in order better to understand the patterns of said cures. Apparently (Apolinário da Conceição 1748, p.24), brother Fabian of Christ had suffered for around forty years from erysipelas, which caused massive swelling in his legs, amongst other symptoms: “the first attack always continued with much pain and formidable swelling, far more after the humors formed on the right a large and unsightly sore, so copiously exuding that it was necessary every hour to change and soak the cloths on that tenacious humor.” The same account reports that erysipelas seemed to have been the cause of his death: “from his legs the malignance rose to his belly; and it suffocated him and placed him on the brink of life” (p.24). The reference to continuous suffering from diseases over many years is one relatively common element in hagiographic accounts from the period, indicating that this was one of the signs by which sanctity was recognized.

One of the key characteristics of saintly deaths was the suppleness and coloration of the dead body, retaining the appearance of a living body (Delooz, 2000, p.192-200). The religious men from the Convent of Saint Anthony were the first to notice these same qualities in the body of brother Fabian, on the day of his death, October 17, 1747. The next

day, two medical doctors, the presbyterian Manoel de Andrada Góes and Antônio Antunes de Menezes, made a more detailed examination of the body. They observed

the flexibility of the cadaver, recorded the most remarkable sore on his belly ..., the terrible one in his life on his right leg, whence, in life, seeped a fetid humor, was now seen agreeable and very fleshy, seeping aromatic, liquid blood like a fragrant balsam ... circumstances which, recognized by these notable doctors, were found to be supernatural, Father Andrada being the first to touch the sore on his leg with his beads (Conceição, 1748, p.34).

During the Middle Ages, sanctity was seen as a kind of energy that emanated from the body (*virtus*). The principal signs by which it was identified were the flexibility of the cadaver, its incorruptibility, and the odiferous fragrances that emanated from it (Vauchez, 1997, 427-433). As mentioned earlier, two of the leading authorities in Rio de Janeiro, Governor Gomes Freire de Andrada – a devout follower of brother Fabian – and the bishop, father Anthony of the Desert, both present at his burial, also confirmed the official statements about the prodigious aspect of the body of the Servant of God after his death (Moraes, 1867, p.214-215; Conceição, 1754, p.598-599; Sinzig, 1928, p.30-34). While ecclesiastical law called for miracles to be confirmed by medical authorities, it is patent that in the context, this authority was itself steeped in devotional beliefs (Gélis, 2010, p.70-71). Nonetheless, the requirement for bodies to undergo medical examination in ordinary and canonization processes represented a novelty in the Modern period.

Many devotees attended the ceremonies conducted for brother Fabian and his burial. According to the main account, the townsfolk covered the whole hill of the Convent of Saint Antony. The religious men, who cared for the cadaver, distributed beads, medallions, and dried “with cloths the blood from the wound on the leg” of the Servant of God. Alongside these objects, all other artifacts with any association to him or which his body had entered into contact were contended for by the faithful. Three habits that covered his body were torn up by the devotees, who kept scraps of the fabric as relics. Furthermore, “hairs from the head” were also extracted, and “one toe was also cut.” To prevent further excesses, the friars decided to bury his body immediately (Conceição, 1748, p.37). Since the beginning of Christianity, belief in the power of relics has been one of the key aspects of the veneration of saints, dating back to the pilgrimages made by the faithful to the tombs of the martyrs (Vauchez, 1989; Geary, 1990). Throughout the Middle Ages, when martyrdom became less commonplace, the ascetic model and the ideal of the imitation of Christ became more common ways for recognizing sanctity, and this belief stretched into the Modern period.

Similarly, the slow and gradual preparation for the final moment was seen as the ideal of a good death during the Modern period. According to Cláudia Rodrigues (2005, p.56-57), “this impulse in the conception that valued a pious and good life as an assurance of a ‘good death’ was expressed in the great leap in the number of publications of manuals on how to prepare for death.” Brother Fabian of Christ was not the only friar at the Convent of Saint Anthony to die in an “odor of sanctity” and have his relics procured by the faithful. The main chronicler of the province of the Immaculate Conception of Rio de Janeiro refers to other Franciscan friars who were granted such treatment. Such was the case of brother

Esteban of Jesus, who professed his vows in 1658 and died in 1687. For several years, he was also the infermarián at the monastery. On the day of his passing, the faithful “cut the first habit into small pieces, which with great consolation they took away. They then did the same to the second [habit] he was wearing. Upon which the religious removed and buried him in great haste; but they did not get away with it all and buried it already without him up to the knees” (Conceição, 1972, p.104 – first issue 1730; see also Freitas, 1931, p.22). Another Franciscan friar who died under similar circumstances was Anthony of Saint Gregory, known as Anthony Capareiro, who professed his sacred vows in 1676 and died in 1732. After his death, “his body remained supple and tractable in its limbs.” Also, “there was no shortage of people, who cut his habit into pieces, leaving the body unrobed, then cutting the hairs from his head, and smaller cloths; upon which the Community succored him, robed him in a new habit and buried him” (Conceição, 1738, p.418). In view of brother Anthony Capareiro’s saintly repute, the province set up an inquiry of witnesses after his death to collect details of the miracles supposedly worked through his intercession (p.412).

The above information places brother Fabian of Christ’s death within a broader context that included not just other Capuchin religious men (reformed Franciscans), but also some of the main models of sainthood during the Catholic Reformation, like Saint Rose of Lima, the first saint to be born in the Americas, who died in 1615 and was canonized in 1671 (Graziano, 2004). To better understand the supposedly miraculous cures wrought by brother Fabian of Christ, he must also be situated alongside other collective behaviors at the time. For this purpose, some methodological and theoretical considerations are necessary.

Concepts, methodology, and hypothesis

First of all, it is important to define the concept of sanctity used in this text. For the purposes of this research, it seemed especially suitable to adopt its broader definition, as used by the sociologist of religion Pierre Deloos (1983, p.193), who, going beyond the canonical or institutional conception of the term, alludes to the social and cultural context:

In confining ourselves to the official notion of a Catholic saint – a person whom the Church honours with an official cult – we have not forgotten that sanctity is a value which goes far beyond this particular application ... In this wider sense, sanctity is regarded as a value. For the sociologist, then, like all other values it is situated in collective representations and must be expressed in systems of associated conduct or behavior within a given network of social relations.

Another important analysis by the same author is the conclusion that sanctity only exists when recognized by others. As such, “all saints are more or less constructed in that, being necessarily saints ‘for other people,’ they are remodelled in the collective representation which is made of them” (Deloos, 1983, p.195; emphasis in original). Both the hagiographic narratives about brother Fabian and the statements of people alleging having witnessed miraculous cures constitute vestiges of a social and cultural process of construing sanctity.

In another work in which he investigates over two hundred beatification and canonization processes dating back to the beginning of the functioning of the Sacred Congregation of

Rites, in 1588, Pierre Delooz offers even more important contributions to the study of links between miracles and healing. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the success of beatification or canonization depended increasingly on whether miracles were confirmed by a secular judge, elaborated on medical knowledge, which, drawing on scientific criteria, would do away with any rational explanation for the benefits produced by the Servants of God. In the processes investigated by the author, most of the miracles confirmed in this way were cures, primarily by the placing, on the ailing person, of an image or relic of the candidate to beatification or canonization. According to Jacques Gélis (2010, p.98), “the worship of relics is based on the possible transfer of sacredness from the body of the saint to the devotee.” Furthermore, many miraculous cures were also obtained by invoking the name of the Servant of God, who intervened in the operation (Delooz, 2000, p.20-59). The use of relics and invocations is alluded to by the people who stated having witnessed miracles worked by the intercession of brother Fabian of Christ, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Profile of the diseases cured by the intercession of brother Fabian of Christ (1748)

Beneficiary	Description of Ailment	Use of Relics from brother Fabian	Invocation of brother Fabian	Promises made to brother Fabian
Teresa de Jesus	Flow of blood	No	Yes	To pray every day some of her beads for his soul
João de Moraes Leal	Pain that constricted the chest and belly when food was ingested	Yes – cloth wiped on the sore on the friar’s leg; cloth that was wrapped around the friar’s leg	No	No
Manoel Gonçalves Loureiro	Corruption near the eyes	Yes – scrap of cloth from the friar’s habit	Yes	Yes – to preach the virtues of the Servant of God
João Batista de Souza	Hypochondriac flatulence at the mouth of the stomach	Yes – rosary of personal use that had touched the friar’s body upon his burial	No	No
Joana, Benguela nation	Pleuris, with marked swelling of the right arm and right side of the chest	Yes – cloth with which the servant of God cured his leg; cup he had used.	No	No
Daughter of Luiza Josefa de Grinalda and Manoel de Souza de Andrade	Corruption on the face	Yes – fragment from the habit	Yes: “brother Fabian, if thou art a saint, show here thy miracle.”	No
Manoel Álvares de Souza	Choleric and hypochondriac flatulence on the right of the body, leaving him paralyzed	No	Yes – asked the Servant of God for a remedy for his ailment	No
Inácia da Encarnação	Cramps	Yes – drank water that had come into contact with a relic from the habit of the servant of God	Yes – asked him for health	Yes – a mass for the soul of the Servant of God and a painting depicting the marvel
Francisco Muniz de Albuquerque	Rigorous fever over 16 days	Yes – staff the Servant of God used in life	Yes	Yes – promised two masses for his soul
João Rodrigues dos Reis	Fleshy growth that prevented him from urinating without using a probe	Yes – on the day of the burial, took his knife and touched the sore on the leg with it.	No	No
Manoel Ferreira Maciel	Prevented from urinating by two stones which blocked the tract	Yes (not specified)	Yes	No
Sebastiana, brown	Strong cramps	Yes – swallowed part of the Servant of God’s habit with a little water	No	No

Table 1: Profile of the diseases cured by the intercession of brother Fabian of Christ (1748) (cont.)

Beneficiary	Description of Ailment	Use of Relics from brother Fabian	Invocation of brother Fabian	Promises made to brother Fabian
Ana, creole	Continuous fever	No	Yes	The master and witness, Amaro Teixeira Machado, promised a mass for the soul of the Servant of God.
Gonçalo	Pox, fevers, and much catarrh	No	Yes	The father, Manoel da Silva Santos, and Gonçalo promised to spread the word about the miracle in a public notice
Francisco	Indeterminate. The ailment made the patient's tongue cold.	Yes (not specified) – swallowed with a little water	No	No
Francisco Rodrigues da Cruz	Privation of the sense of sight, smell, and taste	No	Yes	Promised to spread the word about the deed; gave the servant of God a one-day deadline to cure him.
Manoel de Souza Lobo	Tuberculosis, causing continuous sweating	Yes – cloth marked with blood from the sore on the friar's leg	Yes	Promised alms for the infirmary where the Servant of God had worked.
Catarina, negro	Retention of urine for three days, which caused swelling of her belly	Yes – water from the pitcher used by the Servant of God in life.	No	No

Source: Moraes (1867, p.214-263; 1868, p.23-150).

In Portuguese America in the mid-eighteenth century, the dividing lines between medical practice, religious belief, and magical conceptions were decidedly fuzzy. As in Europe in the early Modern period, the human body was conceived as a microcosm open to the external influences of a broader cosmic order (Laqueur, 2001, p.151-159; Santos, São Bento, 2015). As “man was a microcosm, a synthesis of the universe, containing within himself the same essential qualities as nature,” it meant that diseases could be remedied “with elements from man himself ... [which] meant restoring to him the principles of life and health” (Ribeiro, 1997, p.75). Ribeiro goes on to explain that it was common practice to use dead body parts to treat ailing bodies. The system of correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm gave rise to a series of analogical relationships, which were also present in medical treatises from the time, like *Erário Mineral* (1735), by the surgeon Luís Gomes Ferreira. He observed “the efficacy of certain medicinal powders placed on cloths soaked in spilt blood” (Ribeiro, 1997, p.79) for healing wounds. In this context, faith in the healing power of saints and the Virgin remained unshaken. As for the latter, one work worth mentioning is father Ângelo de Siqueira's *Botica preciosa, e Tesouro precioso da Lapa* (“Precious apothecary and Precious treasure of Lapa”, 1754). As for the healing powers of saints, we have the work by father Luiz Cardoso, *Revista universal ou breve notícia dos santos especiais advogados contra os achaques, doenças, perigos e infortúnios* (“Universal Magazine or short account of the special saints advocating against ailments, diseases, dangers, and misfortunes”), published in 1727 (Marques, 2003, p.179-180). Since at least the beginning of the Modern period, the faithful attributed specific healing powers over certain diseases to specific saints, giving rise to specialized healing amongst the heavenly advocates (Christian Jr., 1981).

It is within the context of such medical and religious practices and conceptions that the healing benefits brought by the intercession of brother Fabian of Christ can be understood. As mentioned earlier, he was not the only one from this setting to stand out as a worker of miracles. Nonetheless, the proximity that existed between religious belief and medical practices created propitious conditions for him to be remembered after his death as an intermediary for the obtainment of miraculous cures. The relationship described was so strong that the relics of another infermarián from the monastery, brother Esteban of Jesus, were, as we have seen, also hotly disputed by the faithful after his death, although cures effected through recourse to these objects are not reported in the sources consulted. One chronicler of the Convent of Saint Anthony even wrote that brother Esteban was the “precursor” of brother Fabian of Christ (Röwer, 2008, p.69). In both cases, the charitable and pious acts of the infermariáns, accomplishing sometimes difficult cures and caring for the sick until their final moments, seem to have paved the way for them to be seen posthumously as potential intermediaries in the cure of disease. If we are to believe the accounts by brother Apollinaris of the Conception, the exercise of these virtues was particularly noteworthy in the case of brother Fabian. In a sense, it could be said that his actions as an infermarián produced a saint for the faithful, whose perception was reshaped by the hagiographic narrative and confirmed by the cures after his death.

Having sketched out the main hypothesis of this investigation, the method used to analyze the 29 witness statements corroborating the miraculous deeds of brother Fabian of Christ will be detailed. Data from the ordinary legal process undertaken after his death are presented in tables, describing the profile of each witness and the ailments they were healed of. After this, the way brother Fabian was invoked as an intercessor of healing is described, as is the use, if any, of relics. After this analysis, the miraculous cures wrought by brother Fabian are compared with those registered for Anthony of Saint Gregory, also recorded by Apollinaris of the Conception.

Details of witnesses, beneficiaries, and ailments cured

The profiles of the witnesses and beneficiaries are shown in Table 2. The witnesses gave their testimony to the two Franciscan friars who conducted the ordinary process between March 11 and July 5, 1748. Most of the beneficiaries and miraculous cures occurred the year before, when the death of brother Fabian of Christ was fresh in the witnesses’ minds. In some cases, the witnesses themselves had benefitted from miracles and other prodigies. Recent studies highlight the role of the moderators of miracles – individuals who had access to and handled the relics, and thus took an active role in the miraculous cures (Archambeau, 2017). Witnesses in the ordinary process can be seen as healing practitioners (see Tables 1 and 2). Sometimes, witnesses mentioned in their own statements the statements of others who had witnessed the miracles, who in some cases were also called on to give testimony. Of the 29 witnesses, 17 (58.6%) were male and 12 were female. Inside each subgroup there is a significant difference between the level of education. Only four of the 12 female witnesses signed their own statements; the others, “for not knowing how to write,” had their statements signed by the notary, brother Anthony of Saint Catherine of

Siena, except for Rosa Maria de Jesus, who had her husband sign for her. Amongst the men, Amaro Teixeira Machado was the only one not to sign his own statement. Interestingly, there were two priests and two licensed professionals amongst the witnesses, who had a higher level of education than the others. As for their socioeconomic profile, not a lot can be gleaned. Two women appear with the title “Dona,” which was characteristically used by women whose husbands had received some kind of honor or held some position in the local administration or the local militia (Silva, 2002, p.95-96). Finally, Francisco Muniz de Albuquerque may be regarded as landed gentry, since he was a municipal councilor.

Table 2: Profile of the witnesses who gave testimony for the ordinary process held after the death of brother Fabian of Christ (1748)

Number of witness	Name of witness	Status / occupation	Place of residence	Literate	Age (years)	Name of the beneficiary of the miracle	Status / occupation of beneficiary	Condition of beneficiary	Age	Relationship of witness with beneficiary
1	Teresa de Jesus	Poor widow	Rua de Nossa Senhora do Parto	No	24	Teresa de Jesus	-	-	-	-
2	Isabel Marques Pereira	-	Rua da Ajuda	No	50	Teresa de Jesus	-	-	-	Helped in her house
3	João de Moraes Leal	Married, tailor	Rua de Nossa Senhora do Rosário	Yes	33	João de Moraes Leal	-	-	-	-
4	Bernarda dos Santos da Silva	Married	Rua de Nossa Senhora do Rosário	No	24	João de Moraes Leal	-	-	-	Wife
5	Francisco de Sales e Souza	Single, businessman	Rua do Cano, outside the city walls	Yes	33	Eusébio, creole	Tailor	Slave (probably)	-	Slave of witness
6	Manoel Gonçalves Loureiro	Married, assistant worker	Rua do Cano, inside the walls	Yes	61	Manoel Gonçalves Loureiro	-	-	-	-
7	João Batista de Souza	Married	Rua da Ajuda	Yes	47	João Batista de Souza	-	-	-	-
	João Batista de Souza	Married	Rua da Ajuda	see above	47	Joana, Benguela nation	-	Slave	-	Slave of witness
8	Maria Luiza da Conceição	Married	Rua da Ajuda	Yes	56	Joana, Benguela nation	-	Slave	-	Slave of witness
9	Luiza Josefa de Grinalda, Dona	Married	Rua dos Pescadores	Yes	23	Unnamed daughter	-	-	3 months	Daughter of witness
10	Manoel de Souza de Andrade	Married, stable hand	Rua dos Pescadores	Yes	50	Unnamed daughter	-	-	3 months	Daughter of witness
11	Manoel Álvares de Souza	Married, licensed surgeon	R. da Ajuda	Yes	43	Manoel Álvares de Souza	-	-	-	-
12	José de Faria	Married, painter	Vila de Santo Antônio de Sá de Cacerebu	Yes	39	Manoel Álvares de Souza	-	-	-	-
13	Inácia da Encarnação	Single	Rua da Vala	No	30	Inácia da Encarnação	-	-	-	-
14	Luzia Maria de Anchieta	Widow	Rua da Vala	No	60	Inácia da Encarnação	-	-	-	Mother of beneficiary

Table 2: Profile of the witnesses who gave testimony for the ordinary process held after the death of brother Fabian of Christ (1748) (cont.)

Number of witness	Name of witness	Status / occupation	Place of residence	Literate	Age (years)	Name of the beneficiary of the miracle	Status / occupation of beneficiary	Condition of beneficiary	Age	Relationship of witness with beneficiary
15	Francisco Muniz de Albuquerque	Married, local councilor	Road behind Conceição dos Pardos hospital	Yes	44	Francisco Muniz de Albuquerque	-	-	-	-
16	Maria Pimenta de Menezes, Dona	Married	Street behind Conceição dos Pardos hospital	Yes	44	Francisco Muniz de Albuquerque	-	-	-	Mother of beneficiary
17	João Rodrigues dos Reis	Single	Rua Direita, from São José to Misericórdia	Yes	46	João Rodrigues dos Reis	-	-	-	-
18	Manoel Ferreira Maciel	Married, smallholder	Araruama, district of Cabo Frio	Yes	48	Manoel Ferreira Maciel	-	-	-	-
19	Maria da Assunção	Married	Araruama, district of Cabo Frio	No	46	Manoel Ferreira Maciel	-	-	-	Mother of beneficiary
20	Maria de Souza	Widow	R. de Nossa Senhora do Rosário	No	50	Sebastiana, brown	-	Slave	-	Slave of witness
21	Amaro Teixeira Machado	Married, merchant	Travessa da Cadeia	No	38	Ana, creole	-	Slave	3	Slave of witness
22	Manoel da Silva Santos	Married, man of business	Rua de Santo Antônio	Yes	33	Gonçalo	-	-	7	Son of witness
23	Rosa Maria de Jesus	Married	Rio de Aguassu	No	40	Francisco	Carpenter	Slave of Bento Coelho	-	-
24	Luiz da Mota Leite	Priest	Rua Direita	Yes	45	Francisco	Carpenter	Slave of Bento Coelho	-	-
25	Francisco Rodrigues Cruz	Married, tailor	Beco de Gaspar Gonçalves, corner of Santa Rita	Yes	33	Francisco Rodrigues Cruz	-	-	-	-
26	Manoel de Souza Lobo	Single, lives of his own means	Rua da Ópera dos Vivos	Yes	43	Manoel de Souza Lobo	-	-	-	-
27	Boaventura Dias Lopes	Single, licensed businessman	Rua da Ópera dos Vivos	Yes	38	Manoel de Souza Lobo	-	-	-	-
28	Pedro Nolasco	Priest, minor cleric	Prainha, near São Francisco chapel	Yes	48	Narciso, creole	-	Slave	-	Slave of witness
29	Caetana Maria da Conceição	Married	Rua de Marcos da Costa	Yes	30	Catarina, negro	-	Slave	-	Slave of Ana dos Santos, mother of witness

Source: Moraes (1867, p.214-263; 1868, p.23-150).

The 29 witnesses provided information on 20 cases of intercession with extraordinary results performed by the Servant of God. Eighteen of these cases were miraculous cures and two (witnesses 5 and 28) were the recovery of runaway slaves. The historiography has discussed how some heavenly advocates, particularly Saint Anthony, were sought out by the faithful specifically to get back lost captives (Mott, 1996, p.127-129; Vainfas, 2003, p.28-37). As the focus of this text is the link between faith and healing, the details of these two cases will not be discussed.

Eleven (61.1%) of the 18 miraculous cures reported in the ordinary process involved extraordinary benefits granted to males and seven to females. This is different from the profile found by Pierre Delooz, who worked on a far larger database of 1,091 people benefitted by miracles in around 200 processes of beatification and canonization, where around 65% of the beneficiaries were female (Delooz, 2000, p.166-169). Five of the beneficiaries in our study were slaves. If we add the two runaways to this number, we can see how heavily slave relations weighed in this context, even when it came to miracles. Another interesting point is the local nature of the followers of brother Fabian: only four of the 29 witnesses did not live in the captaincy of Rio de Janeiro; even so, their places of residence (Araruama, Aguassu, and Santo Antônio de Sá) were all nearby. Finally, three of the 20 beneficiaries of cures were children under 7 years of age. In the processes analyzed by Delooz (2000, p.174), “the extreme youth of a child is frequently noted. The miracle is explained in a way to make it sound less trivial, more appropriate for augmenting the influence of the person invoked.”

Table 1 sums up the 18 cases of supposedly miraculous cures cited in the ordinary process for brother Fabian. The information contained in the papers does not distinguish the causes of the ailments from their symptoms, something found equally by Delooz (2000, p.84), who makes the following comment on this matter: “the diagnoses must therefore be taken for what they are, more descriptive than normative, more of the order of closely observed symptoms than etiology.” Interestingly, brother Fabian’s healing powers covered a relatively wide range of malaises, including digestive problems, skin diseases, problems related to the urinary tract, infectious diseases like pleurisy and tuberculosis, and unspecified fevers. In 13 (72.2%) of the cases, the use of relics was decisive. These were often pieces of cloth, but there was also a rosary and even a blade that had touched the sore on brother Fabian’s leg. As such, the sore that had helped bring about his death was seen by the faithful as a source of healing and life, confirming the conclusions reached by Márcia Moisés Ribeiro about the use of dead body parts to restore the sick to health. As seen in the hagiographic narrative of the death of brother Fabian, the change in the appearance of the wound is represented under the category of “odor of sanctity,” here transformed into “aromatic, liquid blood like a fragrant balsam” (Conceição, 1748, p.34). Fragments of his habit are also featured, being dipped in water, which was then drunk by the patients. One cup and one staff owned by the brother were also used as relics, showing that for the faithful, sanctity was “contagious” and spread to all objects he touched. As Peter Burke (1999, p.140) points out, “in the imputation of sanctity, contiguity was important as well as similarity (or as Roman Jakobson would say, metonymy as well metaphor). The sacred seems to be contagious.”

One interesting feature of the cures wrought by brother Fabian is the subordination of medical knowledge to the devotional plane. Manoel Álvares de Souza, a certified surgeon, declared in the ordinary process that he was overtaken by “choleric and hypochondriac flatulence” on the right side of his body. Finding no relief in any medication for 18 or 19 days, he had received the sacraments and prepared for his death. It was in this state that, seven days after the burial of brother Fabian, a friend went to his house and “told him in detail of what had taken place in this convent when the body of the Servant of God was committed to the earth.” The account inspired him to such faith in brother Fabian that Manoel Álvares de Souza asked him for a “remedy for his infirmity,” a favor he was granted the following day, when he awoke free of the ailment and with full use of his vital functions (Moraes, 1868, p.24). A similar case was that of Manoel Ferreira Maciel, who for some two months suffered from a blocked urinary tract, finding himself virtually unable to urinate for the final two days. He was visited by Estêvão Ribeiro, the surgeon who had cared for him throughout his illness, “telling him that he should call on the Servant of God and in order better to do so he would bring a relic from him; he showed such faith in said Servant of God that, bringing it the next day, he applied to the ailing man with such fortune that, doing this on the night of one day, by the following morning one of the stones was released, and he urinated copiously” (Moraes, 1868, p.78).

Alongside the 18 cures after the death of brother Fabian of Christ, the main chronicler of his activities refers to two more benefits achieved thanks to his intercession that were not recorded in the ordinary process:

João Jorge, upholsterer by trade and dweller of the same town, also confessed publicly that, having a boy, who, unable to take nourishment from his mother for four-and-twenty hours, nor ingesting any other sort of food, was at risk of death, and that taking him a rose from the chapel from the Servant of God when he was in church, washing it in water, they gave it to the child, who anon did suckle from the breast (Conceição, 1748, p.44).

Meanwhile, an unnamed man who had lost a credit note for a sizeable sum of money that, after taking due measures, he held out no hope of recovering, “implored to God for the blessings of this His Servant, straightway did the note appear” (Conceição, 1748, p.44).

Having found that in the ordinary process of brother Fabian of Christ, 90%, or 18, of the cases were of miraculous cures wrought posthumously, surely this begs the question as to whether a similar pattern can be seen in other Franciscan friars from the same monastery who died with a reputation of sanctity or whether, in fact, this was a specific feature of brother Fabian. Sadly, the sources are sparse in this respect. Brother Apollinaris of the Conception alludes to other religious men known to have special virtues at that monastery; however, their deaths did not apparently spark a frenzied pursuit of fragments of their habits on the part of the faithful. In the province of the Immaculate Conception, which covered all the monasteries in the captaincies of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, and Espírito Santo, there are records of occasional Servants of God who died under similar circumstances. Only by consulting the provincial manuscript records will it be possible to compare them more systematically, something that falls outside the scope of this work.

For now, a limited parallel can be drawn between Fabian of Christ and Anthony of Saint Gregory, or Capareiro. In his account, brother Apollinaris of the Conception also reproduced information from the ordinary process for the latter, who died in 1732 in the Convent of Saint Anthony of Rio de Janeiro.

The documents from the ordinary process for brother Anthony Capareiro record five cures reported by witnesses, all from when he was still alive. This is already different from brother Fabian, all of whose reported cures were posthumous. Five of the 12 extraordinary deeds he did in lifetime were cures, four of which for slaves: Francisca was able to stand after years-long paralysis; Cláudia was cured of smallpox; Gonçalo was cured of malignant pleurisy; and Maria was cured of the ailment “known in Brazil as quigilha (in which the sick tend to lose toes and fingers until they finally come to die).” Maria Vieira, not a slave, was cured of a tumor on her face. Finally, the army captain Francisco Gomes Ribeiro was cured of an ailment affecting his urinary tract (Conceição, 1738, p.412-420). After the death of Anthony Capareiro, those cured after coming into contact with scraps of cloth from his habit were: Joaquim de Almeida, suffering from a headache; an unnamed man with a paralyzed leg; Helena de Souza, who had a swollen belly; and Maria Antônia, with a “terrible and persistent cough.” Finally, a black woman from Guinea, slave of Francisco da Cunha, was healed of an inflammation on her face. She was cured by this man also thanks to the miraculous intercession of brother Anthony Capareiro (Conceição, 1738, p.419-420).

From the two cases investigated here, and adding the less comprehensive report on brother Esteban of Jesus and other friars who died in the province of the Immaculate Conception of Rio de Janeiro, it can be inferred that the death of Servants of God with a reputation of sanctity created amongst the faithful the expectation that their mortal remains and objects they had had in life would possess healing powers. Even though further investigation is needed, the impression is that brother Fabian of Christ was not an isolated case but part of a broader pattern in religious life at the time. It could even be suggested that his reputation of sanctity was constructed primarily after his death. Before, just two passages from the writings of brother Apollinaris of the Conception (1748, p.27-28) narrate extraordinary deeds: the prognosis of a successful journey by the Carmelite monk Bernardo de Vasconcellos, and the prediction of cure of the governor of Rio de Janeiro.

Final considerations

Living within a broader context of devotion and expectations of miraculous cures, brother Fabian stands somewhat apart from other Servants of God who had a reputation of sanctity at the Convent of Saint Anthony and even in the province of the Immaculate Conception of Rio de Janeiro. First of all, the chronicler Apollinaris of the Conception made an extra effort to promote his sanctity, devoting a whole work to him, *Eco sonoro*, which was not the case of any other Franciscan friar whose lives he narrated in *Pequenos na terra, grandes no céu*. Additionally, and perhaps on the initiative of brother Apollinaris himself, news of the death of brother Fabian of Christ was published in the June 11, 1748, edition of *Gazeta de Lisboa*, one of the most long-lasting official newspapers printed in Portugal (Moura, 2016, p.127-128). In the nineteenth century, scholars like Joaquim Manuel de

Macedo and Alexandre José de Mello Moraes, influenced by the national memory project of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro), set aside space in their accounts for the activities of brother Fabian of Christ (Macedo, 2004, p.234-242; Moraes, 1867, 1868). Finally, the rediscovery of his tomb in the 1920s prompted the Franciscan order in Rio de Janeiro to again promote his veneration through the publication of different works about him and the appearance of new miracles attributed to him. This multiplication of witnesses certainly sets brother Fabian apart from his peers from the same monastery and province.

There is an extensive historiography concerning sanctity and its formal recognition by the church in the Modern period. To respond to the criticisms of the protestant reformers, Rome centralized and made stricter the procedure for the constitution of new saints. The creation of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, in 1588; the measures taken by Pope Urban VIII (1623-1644), giving the pope absolute control over new canonizations; and the publication of the work of Pope Benedict XIV about the beatification of Servants of God and the canonization of the blessed (1734-1738), establishing the legal model for the promotion of causes, are all milestones in this process (Woodward, 1992, p.72-75). The changes to the way sanctity was recognized in the seventeenth century led Rome to prioritize, amongst the Servants of God whose causes were promoted, the ownership of heroic and theological virtues – like faith, hope, and charity – to the detriment of the working of miracles. In contrast, miracles continued to be essential from the perspective of the faithful. This difference prompts some authors to point out the existence at the time of two different views on sanctity: that of the hero of faith, shared by the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and that of the healing saint, closer to the demands of the faithful (Woodward, 1992, p.218-219; Po-Chia Hsia, 2005, p.139-141). In the eighteenth century, Rome became more receptive to the recognition of saints “inspired by Franciscan spirituality, characterized by simplicity, populism and healing” (Po-Chia Hsia, 2005, p.143).

The analysis conducted of the sources discussed in this study allows us to state that the construction of the sanctity of brother Fabian of Christ was based on elements derived from both models. In the hagiographic sources, he is depicted primarily as a hero of faith. *Eco sonoro* lists a veritable catalogue of virtues displayed by brother Fabian: humility, obedience, chastity, poverty, charity, devotion to Christ, penitence, and patience (Apolinário da Conceição, 1748, p.9-25). In the work by brother João José de Castro (1944, p.66-158), written far later, the whole second part, with 21 chapters, is given over to the virtues of this Servant of God. Meanwhile, in the ordinary process performed after his death, the vision of the faithful prevails, in which he is depicted as a healer responsible for curing different diseases. The information presented here is indicative enough to affirm that in the context in question, such healing practices cannot be considered separately from belief in the intercession of Servants of God and saints.

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