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Mexico's Catholic Church is getting a new addition to its ranks of "blessed," with the beatification of the Rev. Moisés Lira.

The beatification ceremony took place Saturday at [Our Lady of Guadalupe's Basilica](#), led by Cardinal Marcello Semeraro, who was appointed by Pope Francis for the occasion.

Before Lira, the latest Mexican to be beatified was María Concepción Cabrera in 2019.

Here's a look at Lira's life in a country [that's home to nearly 100 million](#) Catholics.

Who was Moisés Lira?

He was born in September 1893 in Puebla, one of Mexico's most conservative states.

His mother died when he was 5 and he suffered the absence of his father, who had to relocate for work.

Lira dreamt of becoming a priest from a young age. In 1914, he became the first novice of a congregation founded by French priest Félix de Jesús Rougier. And in 1922, after being ordained a priest, he wrote the motto that would define his life: "It is necessary to be very small to be a great saint."

Lira devoted his life to teach catechists, care for the ill and offer spiritual guidance to vulnerable communities. In 1934, he founded a congregation — the Missionaries of Charity of Mary Immaculate — as well as schools and psychiatric institutions.

He died in Mexico City in 1950.

What is the miracle attributed to him?

According to Mother María de la Luz Nava, from the congregation founded by Lira, the miracle took place between May and June 2004.

Back then, a pregnant woman from Guanajuato — another of Mexico's conservative states — got the worst news imaginable: at 18 weeks of gestation, her unborn daughter suffered from a condition characterized by accumulation of fluid.

The diagnosis, the doctor said, could be fatal for the fetus or affect the mother. And though he offered to terminate the pregnancy, the woman and her husband refused.

"There wasn't much hope," Mother María de la Luz said. "But they were very clear about one thing: they were not going to opt for [abortion](#). They were going to continue looking for options so that their daughter would be born well."

Back home, the woman found a brochure on the Rev. Lira's work. "I don't know you," she told him. "But please, help me."

For nine days, she prayed. And when a new doctor's appointment came, a surprise awaited.

"What did you do?" the doctor asked the couple. "Because your daughter is healthy."

"This is where the intercession of Father Moisés is very evident," said Mother María de la Luz. "And it shows how a miracle is produced by faith."

De la Luz's congregation learned about the case in 2014. The beatification request was made through the local diocese the following year and eight years passed until Pope Francis issued a decree for the miracle in 2023.

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What causes can be entrusted to Lira?

According to the Rev. David Padrón, who has worked on causes for canonization, the miracle attributed to Lira makes him a protector of life from conception.

"This is a very strong message from God," Padrón said. "Maybe those mothers who have a problem during their pregnancies can confide in him."

Aside from that, he said, parishioners could also entrust him with health and education causes, because Lira worked extensively with sick people and students.

"Much of his pastoral work dignified those who, due to illness, poverty or some other situation, did not enjoy a dignified life in society," Padrón said.

What's next?

Catholic leaders trust that a second miracle would be produced after Saturday's beatification, which would allow them to pursue Lira's canonization.

In the meantime, local parishes will honor him each June 15. "We have included him as part of the saints of the Archdiocese of Mexico, hoping that, when he is canonized, he can be celebrated throughout the world," Padrón said.

Lira's most treasured relic is a metacarpal bone from his right hand. It's symbolic, Padrón said, because Lira shared the Gospel through his writings and it's part of the pointing finger.

"The blessed and the saints are men and women who point us to Christ," he said.

A few first-class relics — body parts of Lira — will be soon distributed through parishes that were significant in his life or for Mexico's Catholic community, such as Our Lady of Guadalupe's Basilica and Puebla's cathedral.