

# INTRODUCTION

Transplantation has been described in many legends, even before recorded history, as a cure for disease. The first reported attempt, carried out under miraculous conditions, was believed to have occurred around the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, at a holy place dedicated to the Saints Cosmas and Damian, who would appear in the night to give advice, medication and heal the sick. They came to replace the gangrenous leg of a verger with a leg taken from a recently deceased Ethiopian Moor. Next morning the sacristan awoke to find a healthy black leg instead of his diseased limb.

Artistic representation of this miracle has been the subject for several painters. One of them is the work known as “Milagro de los Santos Cosme y Damian” by Pedro de Raxis (16<sup>th</sup> century), exhibited at the Carlos V Museum, in the Alhambra, Granada, Spain.

In 1981, Barry Kahan in an editorial in the New England Journal of Medicine, raised the question of whether this third century legend will become a 20<sup>th</sup> century fact.

Today, after the introduction of cyclosporin in clinical practice almost 20 years ago, and with the development of therapeutic drug monitoring with sensitive and specific methodologies for most immunosuppressants, the field of transplantation has reached its present stage.

New immunosuppressive therapies have been introduced in recent years and others are still being studied before becoming accepted. Some of these aspects are presented during this symposium. I would like to thank all the speakers for their updated and interesting presentations.

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