

Antonio Banderas Calls Hero Miner ‘Crazy’ Man of Faith

Twelve thousand miners die on the job every year. And all signs pointed toward disaster when 33 Chilean men entered the San José mine in August 2010.

More than a billion people watched and waited when news broke that the miners were buried alive more than 2,000 feet underground. It took rescue teams two months to reach them, yet all survived.

The other miracle was more than 20 miners gave their lives to Christ during the 69-day ordeal.

Stories Behind the Story

Their story hits the big screen Friday, Nov. 13, 2015. The film was shot in Chile, and deep in the mines of Colombia. Actors Antonio Banderas and Lou Diamond Phillips lead the cast.

Banderas plays Mario Sepúlveda, the man fellow miners grew to call Super Mario. Sepúlveda visited Banderas on the set.

In describing Sepúlveda, Banderas told *CBN News*, “He is not a quitter. He is a man of faith. And he is crazy. I really like that crazy because it is contagious and he knew that.”

‘Camp Hope’

Phillips lobbied for a role in the film.

“I knew I wanted to be a part of this film as soon as I knew they were going to make the movie,” Phillips shared.

He plays mining supervisor Don Lucho. But like millions who followed this survival story, Phillips was moved by the

miners' spirit.

"People like to espouse faith," Phillips said. "But the truth of the matter is, when the rubber hits the road, so to speak, you are tested. And I think that is the wonderful thing about faith. Untested faith might not be faith. It might be noise. And these men were tested."

"But it wasn't just them. It was their families," Phillips added.

Families pitched tents outside the mine and pressured the Chilean government to keep working to save their loved ones. They called it "Camp Hope."

Academy Award winning French actress Juliette Binoche plays María Segovia. Maria is the sister of one of the men who was trapped in mine, and she helped to lead the camp and push for answers.

Binoche described her character to *CBN News*, saying, "I read the script and her faith gave me faith."

"Maria Segovia was an orphan at 6 years old. She raised her siblings," Binoshe said. "She learned to do empanadas very early on, and sold them in the street making money, got pregnant at 14."

Minister of Mining

Rodrigo Santoro plays Chilean Minister of Mining Laurence Golborne. He had only been on the job a few months when the incident happened.

Recounting the role to *CBN News*, Santoro said, "He meets the families and the media that starts to gather, and there is pressure from everywhere and this guy is in the center of this huge storm. But I think the biggest reason is he starts to relate and connect and have a relationship with the families. They inspire him. They encourage him."

The minister of mining had significant help to do his job, including NASA engineers who equipped the Fenix, the rescue tube, with a camera and sound equipment to communicate with the miners as they lifted them one by one more than 2,000 feet from underground.

What could have been the end of their story turned out to be the beginning of an even greater life of faith and family. The men, who were buried alive as coworkers, emerged as brothers.

CBN News was there when they visited Israel together to walk where Jesus walked and be baptized in the Jordan River.

Banderas witnessed the bond between the miners as he spent time with them in Chile researching his role and working on the film.

"When you are with them for a while, they cannot stop with cruel jokes, very cruel," Banderas told *CBN News*. "They are at each other like crazy. It is fun to watch them, [and] the dynamics of the group. They even organized soccer games inside."