

**THE CASE FOR A CLEAR AND DETAILED AND THEREFORE POSSIBLY MIRACULOUS VISION AT KNOCK**

On the night of the 21st of August 1879 the Virgin Mary flanked by St Joseph and a bishop thought to be St John the Evangelist and an altar with a lamb and cross on it allegedly appeared on the gable wall of the Parish Church for a few hours. Fifteen people witnessed the vision including a child of five (page 60, The Evidence for Visions of the Virgin Mary) and stood watching it for two hours allegedly in torrential rain.

The commission took down accounts which are far from convincing.

Patrick Hill said the vision was very clear and detailed and described it in terms that make it likely to have been supernatural. Other parts of his testimony indicate he was exaggerating.

The Church argues that the vision was a miracle for it was seen in daylight - indicting that projector was not used for it would not have been very good in daylight. It also says the gable where the images appeared was miraculously dry. It claims the light around the vision was so bright that no human being could have created it.

A testimony, Mary Beirne's, seems to say the images were visible in daylight. The original however says no such thing.

"It was either eight o'clock or a quarter to eight at the time. It was still bright" is different from the original which goes, "It was about 8 o' Clock and dusk."

Testimony of Mrs. Hugh Flatley, widow of Hugh Flatley, states : — I was passing by the chapel of Knock on the evening of the 21st of August, about eight o'clock, and I beheld most clearly and distinctly the figures of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joseph, and that of St. John the Evangelist, standing erect at the gable-end of the chapel, towards the south side ; I thought that the parish priest had been ornamenting the church, and got some beautiful likenesses removed outside.

This testimony could well be a total fabrication. The McPhilpin book, The Apparitions and Miracles at Knock, contradicts it, "As some persons were hurriedly going along the road which leads to the chapel, at about half-past seven P. M., they perceived the wall beautifully illuminated by a soft, white, flickering light, through which could be perceived brilliant stars twinkling as on a fine frosty night. The first person who saw it passed on". Also, "The time at which the apparition appeared was some twenty minutes after sunset". This slip is very important. It refutes those who say, "The images were not made by a projector for projector images would not have been so plain in daylight." It is claimed Flatley saw them before it got too dark! When a work supportive of the apparition being authentic says this.

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WAS VISION CLEAR CLOSE UP? EVEN A CRUDE VISION COULD LOOK GOOD AT A REASONABLE DISTANCE				
DEPOSITION	VISION VERY CLEAR	CLEAR AND DISTINCT WHATEVER THAT MEANS	DEGREE OF CLARITY NOT STATED	CLARITY DENIED
1 Patrick Hill	YES			
2				YES

Mary McLoughlin				
3 Mary Beirne		YES		
4 Patrick Walsh - AT A LARGE DISTANCE SO CLARITY QUESTION IRRELEVANT				
5 Patrick Beirne		YES - but denied in 1932		
6 Maggie Beirne		YES		
7 Dominick Beirne	YES  Said eyes could be seen so we assume he went close up and saw them.			
8 Mrs Flatley		YES		
9 Bridget Trench			YES	
10 Catherine Murray				YES
11 John Curry				YES
	YES  But she			

12	Judith Campbell	contradicted the others by saying the lamb carried the cross. And her signature was forged on her testimony.			
13	Margaret Beirne 2			YES	
14	Dominick Beirne Sen		YES		
15	John Durkan			YES	

## WHAT THE SILENCE SAYS

Why do so few of the seers say the vision was clear and distinct? Surely the priests would have asked, "Was the apparition clearly seen?" The silence indicates either that the investigation was slack and careless or that the apparition was vague and the priests didn't want to record that. Either case means that there is insufficient grounds for holding that a miracle happened. You can only say a miracle possibly happened if the evidence is clear enough and good enough. But we can't say that of the Knock depositions.

Nobody was apparently asked if the images were transparent or not or if they were no record was kept. This may suggest that references to transparency might have been left out or avoided thanks to leading questions as the priests didn't want people to think a magic lantern was used to make the vision.

Why did so few go up close? There is no independent evidence that any of them did apart from Trench. Hill said she went up close. They stood a distance away as if they had to be far away to see the vision right. No wonder the priests probably didn't encourage anybody to consider saying how clear the images were!

Why do so few of the seers claim that the apparition was not flat against the wall? Even those that say the figures were rounded indicate that they might have been mistaken.

Why were the seers not asked why some of them disagreed about there being a cross? If they were, we need the record. Where is it? A proper investigation would have kept the explanation for us.

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