



Does challenging superstition or faith protect people?  
 Is it mistaken to support organised religion in membership or donations?

If people do good because they are human, not because God prompts them,  
 is it right to risk giving God any credit when they alone own their good?



## FALSE LOURDES MIRACLES - LOURDES FAILS THE TESTS FOR BEING REAL VISIONS FROM GOD

Lourdes was the start of many hoaxes. A young girl called Bernadette claimed to be having visions there. These were interpreted to be of the Virgin Mary.

The headmaster Antoine Clarens concerning an apparition writes what he observed, "She fixed her eyes on the opening which holds the tangle of brambles and for a few moments she prayed, with a candle in her hand. Then she grew pale and smiled and bowed in greeting. She then looked sad as though she were about to cry, but soon smiled again and then bowed once more. That strange sadness which spread over her face for an instant, her smile which defies all description, her strange pallor, the position of her eyes, made her unrecognisable. You would have said she no longer belonged to this world." The pallor was very disturbing. It indicates something other than a holy vision sent by God.

According to the account by devout Catholic, Estrade, in his *The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin Mary at the Grotto of Lourdes*, an atheist doctor, Dozous, converted to Catholicism over seeing the entranced Bernadette cupping a candle flame for fifteen minutes and not getting burnt even though the flame was licking her fingers.

Other sources say that Dozous' account of the candle does not match that of other people who observed the event and denied that the flame licked Bernadette's fingers (page 57, *Encountering Mary*.) The Church teaching that lying to promote a religion or faith is a sin is not taken seriously because the Church says that you are not obligated to confess the lie to those who have been tricked by you for it is not a malicious lie. It is worth remembering that when considering people who claim to have witnessed visions and miracles.

Estrade's memory of the Lourdes happenings has been called into question (page 41,46, *Evidence of Satan in the Modern World*). But we must take him as reliable in all that is not contrary to the facts and which is plausible.

With the crowd around Bernadette, somebody would have moved the candle when they saw the way she was holding it. They knew she would not know if she was burning. It is no use objecting that they saw it was not burning her for if you see a person in danger it is like a reflex action for you immediately rush to that person's aid without even thinking. Nobody would have let her hold a candle in the first place in case she would go into a trance and get burnt. Nobody had the right to let her do this because the apparitions had not been checked and authenticated by the Church yet.

The wind must have been strong when she cupped the flame so why did it not go out when it went below her hands?

She would have had the fingers closed to protect the flame so the doctor could not have seen the flame licking her fingers but maybe the little fingers. He made her open her hands to examine her fingers afterwards suggesting the palms and the insides of the fingers should have been burned so we detect more confusion in the dear old doctor.

Bernadette was thirteen and small for her age. Her hands were delicate. The flame would have been walled by the centre of her hands. Bernadette supposedly held her hands this way for ten to fifteen minutes. And that the end of her ecstasy she jumped for she was burned. So the candle would have burned down about two inches in that time. So it could not have been licking her fingers but the lower part of her hands including the little fingers facing the ground if anything. So what was the doctor doing examining her hands? Establishing a miracle where there was no miracle.

When she started to burn after the ecstasy she would have blistered and yet the doctor says she had no marks. He was lying.

And why did the doctor say that the flame licked her left hand and that he watched this for fifteen minutes? (page 127, *The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin* etc). He claimed that there were people there who could back up what he said. But he did not even give the date which indicates that he was lying for he was unwilling to have the witnesses tracked down. A surer indication is that it would not just have been the left hand when she was cupping.

You don't mention witnesses and stop them from being tracked down unless you are hiding something.

The doctor for reasons of his own had turned against Atheism – perhaps he just gave up on it for the Church was stronger - and told a lie to promote the Catholic religion.

Even the Church would have been embarrassed to admit that such an inconsequential and unnecessary miracle happened. The Church usually rejects apparitions that do such things or claim to – outright. The Church teaches that God doesn't do trivial miracles. If he does then it is like he is making mistakes and has to do miracles to correct them. Trivial miracles are too trivial to function as signs from God. To claim that a trivial miracles has happened is blasphemous.

Catholics claim that Bernadette dug a hole with her hands in the grotto and a spring burst from it. The apparition had told her to drink of the spring and to wash in it. Bernadette said, "I saw only a little dirty water; I put my hand in, but could not take any. I scratched, and the water came, but muddy. Three times I threw it away, but the fourth time I could drink it" (page 28, Bernadette of Lourdes - Laurentin). So Bernadette saw the spring. She didn't cause the spring. It was already there. Page 59 says that one day Bernadette went and climbed over the area where the spring appeared and kissed the ground during an apparition. She did the same thing the following day. She went about as if she was looking for something. No sound came as her lips moved so nobody knew what she was looking for. She saw a muddy pool and rubbed the filthy water over her face. Then she ate a plant. This gives rise to the thought that Bernadette found the muddy pool by luck. Then it occurred to her to claim that the apparition told her about it. Then the crowd started to work at the muddy pool (page 61). No wonder it flowed afterwards as they had cleared the debris and dirt. There was no miracle there. A real miracle would have had the water shooting up of the ground pure and clean.

According to Hilda Graef in *Mary: A History of Doctrine and Devotion*, some spectators copied Bernadette and took the same dirty filthy water. The apparition was being very irresponsible for she must have known what the people would or could do.

Those who looked on with horror and said Bernadette was insane may have had a point. They were there so why do we think we can declare her mentally clear when we were not there?

There are hundreds of Marian apparitions reported in the world. Many of them bless springs of water - typically springs that have always been there. It had to happen that at some point a spring would appear during at least one of them by coincidence. If this had happened at Lourdes it would be nothing spectacular but it didn't.

It is recorded that the grotto where Bernadette scraped was full of rubbish. This rubbish included rotten flesh and surgical bandages. The apparition must have been fake for the real Virgin Mary would not have instructed sickly asthmatic and malnourished Bernadette to risk her health. Bernadette had no guarantee that the Virgin Mary really was with her. She didn't even consider the entity to be the Virgin but aquero - the thing. The Church says that risks should not be taken over an apparition until it has verified it. And Church approval takes a long time to come to pass and when it comes the Church does not like anybody even then sacrificing too much for an apparition for the approval is no more than just permission to accept the vision than approval.

As for this spring at the Lourdes Grotto that Catholic mythmakers say Our Lady magically made to appear, it was already there when Bernadette discovered it while having a vision. Some fishermen and others said they had sheltered in the Grotto and observed there never had been a spring in it. Shepherds and farmers said that they had seen a spring that occasionally appeared (page 222, *The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin* etc). But when Bernadette scraped the ground for the spring only a thin trickle came out suggesting that the former just hadn't noticed it. The shepherds and the farmers are the most reliable for everybody wanted to believe that the spring was not there previously. The digging could have moved whatever was obstructing the spring. Bernadette had visited the grotto before and could have known that there was a spring or trickle there. The farmers and the shepherds are the least incredible witnesses so we should believe them.

The real Mary would have promised a spring to Bernadette long before telling her to find it, giving Bernadette time to tell the people. Nobody could then say that Bernadette who did lots of wacky and dirty things in the grotto found the spring by pure luck and without looking for it and then decided to lie and say the lady told her there was spring seconds before she stumbled on it.

The Church knows and admits that the spring was not a physical miracle (page 87, *The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin* etc). *Mother of Nations* says that it is apparently generally accepted that there was a spring all along but that it was dried up (page 94).

The booklet, *Bernadette of Lourdes*, informs us that the source was there all the time and that it flowed better when the rubbish that was an obstacle to it was cleared away and it did not run from the spot where Bernadette scraped with her hands alone (page 31). Those who surmise that Bernadette miraculously knew the right spot are to be disappointed.

The spot was an infectious dump and this lady had Bernadette eating grass from it and her and the people drinking from a spring that was there all along according to shepherds at the time (page 87, 222, The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin etc; Mother of Nations, page 94). The Virgin asked them to do something dangerous over appearances that were not checked for authenticity yet! She was a devil.

If St Bernadette made up the whole story about the lady she had to hide in a convent to avoid being caught out in her lies. The body of St Bernadette is declared to be incorrupt and displayed in the convent she joined at Nevers. She was made a saint on the 8th December, 1933. But she was a fake saint. If incorruptibility is a miracle it is a warning that you pay no heed to the religious implications of miracles. We cannot be sure that she did not get injections of embalming fluid and she is made up with wax and was found emaciated in her grave so we cannot work out how far the incorruptibility can be inexplicable. It is disturbing to have an incomplete miracle. That is what a devil would have to do if he had miracle powers for he might not be strong enough to do it properly. God is all-powerful and would not do half-miracles. The incorruptibility would not prove that the visions were from God but from another source - a darker one.