

THE IMMACULATE DECEPTION - SUMMING UP LOURDES SPURIOUS VISIONS

Lourdes is in France. It nestles among the Pyrenees. In 1858, a destitute asthmatic child of thirteen, Bernadette Soubirous, claimed she saw the Virgin Mary in a cave at the dump of Massabielle eighteen times between the 11th of February and July 18th. Today Lourdes is renowned for its claimed miraculous healings.

On March 25, 1858, the ghost in the grotto told Bernadette who she was. She said, "I am the Immaculate Conception".

The Immaculate Conception is the doctrine that the Virgin was conceived in her mother's womb without the sin of Adam staining her soul. You cannot say that you are the maculate conception or the Immaculate Conception any more than you can say, "I am birth". Was the apparition not of the Virgin Mary but a symbol? A symbolic image sent by God could call itself the Immaculate Conception for it pictures that event. But the vision made Bernadette believe she was the Virgin Mary, a person not a symbol. So we see a contradiction. The apparition could have easily said, "I am the fruit of the immaculate conception". Jesus said that he was the resurrection in the John Gospel but that was poetry for a poetic gospel. The lady of Lourdes would not have been poetic to an uneducated child and at such a solemn moment.

Jesus said that he was the resurrection meaning in the sense that he was the giver of life. It is a poetic way of saying what he is. But this would not allow Mary to say she was the Immaculate Conception for it is not saying what she is. It is identifying her with a past event. Being conceived immaculate does not mean one is immaculate now.

The nearly reliable sources tell us that Bernadette claimed that she did not know what the immaculate conception was. But they say she knew that it had a connection to Mary (page 125, The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin etc) suggesting she knew more than she was letting on and knew enough to make her pretend that the lady said she was the Immaculate Conception. Bernadette would have heard of the immaculate conception from the priest who stayed where she stayed in Bartres for the papal proclamation of the Immaculate Conception was big news in the Church and everywhere. She would have heard it in the chapel or heard prayers in its honour there. Prayers in its honour would have been and were said in her hearing at the grotto (page 124, *ibid*).

The miraculous medal devotion would have been popular among the people Bernadette talked to and prayed with. The prayer to Mary conceived without had to have been recited at the grotto by devotees to Mary when Bernadette was there. Bernadette said that when the lady told her her name she used the miraculous medal pose. Bernadette did know of the immaculate conception.

Bernadette would have asked what the Immaculate Conception was. She went to Mass on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. She certainly knew what lies to use to get people to believe her. The idea would have come to her from people who wanted the apparition to prove itself by revealing secrets that Bernadette would and could not know. She wanted the revelation of the lady's identity to seem like supernatural knowledge.

The lady said, "Quy soi L'Immaculada Councepciou" as it is in the local dialect (page 40, Bernadette of Lourdes - Laurentin). Yet Bernadette called it coun-chet-sion only hours after the vision (page 125, The Appearances of the Blessed Virgin etc). So she knew the word but wasn't able to pronounce it. Who could forget the pronunciation of such a great revelation of a great vision unless they never had a vision at all? Bernadette kept repeating what the lady said until she reached the priest (page 93, *ibid*). This makes it impossible for her to have forgotten the pronunciation later. Bernadette must have faked her ecstasy that took place during her vision for real ecstasy is so exciting that nothing can be forgotten. The Immaculate Conception came to her from her confused Bartres memories not from an apparition.

Did the lady say she was the immaculate something else and not the Immaculate Conception? Maybe she did and so she was not the Virgin.

The lady never promised cures but they are what Lourdes is famous for. Strange that there are no wooden legs lying about it. Why should we believe this lady that she is the Immaculate Conception even if she did say that?

The Church claimed to authenticate that Mary appeared to Bernadette at Lourdes in 1858. It did not. What it authenticated (leave aside the question about whether the authenticating is of any validity) was that Bernadette was having trances that couldn't be explained by doctors and that a spring appeared and that healings took place. None of this proves that Bernadette really saw Mary. She might have lied or misunderstood. Or the vision might only have been pretending to be Mary. She may have went into a miraculous trance that affected her brain to make her imagine she saw the Virgin Mary.

For the Church to say that it authenticated the apparitions of Mary at Lourdes is simply for it to lie. So here we have an extraordinary claim, that Mary appeared for which there is little evidence if you want to be generous. But the truth is there is NO evidence at all. So the miracles of Lourdes did nothing only support lies. We know that the stranger or more unlikely the claim, the evidence needs to be of a standard and strength to match the strangeness of the claim. The evidence needs to be in proportion to the level of unbelievableness of the claim. You don't need the same evidence that Charlie met Annie at Loch Ness that you need to justify believing that Charlie saw the monster there. Lourdes and all the accepted Catholic apparitions deny this truth and so are evil and trying to drag us into superstition.

Conclusion

A Church commission thought the visions worthy of belief. The Church used subterfuge and deception to declare the apparitions of Lourdes authentic.

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