

ST BERNADETTE OF LOURDES - INCORRUPT CORPSE OR WAXWORK?

WIKIPEDIA ON INCORRUPTIBILITY: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Incorruptibility>

WEBPAGE ABOUT CATHOLIC DEATH CULTISM: http://www.badnewsaboutchristianity.com/gfk_necrophilia.htm

The best known case of a saint's body remaining without decay long after her or his death is that of St Bernadette of Lourdes. It is hard to be too impressed though when you know that the body of St Zita which is kept in the Church of San Frediano, Lucca, Italy has been crumbling away. You can see a picture of it in Everything You Know About God is Wrong, The Disinformation Guide to Religion, Edited by Russ Kick, The Disinformation Company, New York, 2007, page 167. She was supposedly found undecayed three hundred years after her death. Why God doesn't have saints dying at 100 and still looking like they were in their late teens is a question Catholics prefer to forget. The imperfection of the preservation miracles suggests that Satan is doing them for it is said he does trickery and his miracles are not outstanding like God's are. If so, then Satan then wants "saintly" beacons to draw people to shipwreck by faith in the Roman Church.

Bernadette supposedly saw the Blessed Virgin Mary at Lourdes in 1858. 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 or compatibility with the Catholic gospel yet! She was a devil. The Church says that nobody is bound to believe in apparitions for the word of God has been closed since the death of the last apostle.

Bernadette when she was Sister Marie-Bernard wrote gossipy and cheeky letters to her family (pages 318 and 319, Bernadette of Lourdes by Therese Taylor). Some saint! Even her confessor said there was nothing extraordinary about her holiness.

Bernadette died Wednesday 16 April 1879 not long after 3 pm in the Convent of St Gildard, Nevers, France.

More than two hours after her death the body was found to be strangely supple and the sisters dressed her in the habit of a nun.

Her funeral took place on April 19 and it is said the body was still not decomposing. On 22 May 1879, she was buried in a special crypt in the chapel.

Thirty years later, her coffin was taken out of the vault in which she had been entombed. The coffin was taken to a room and the body was removed. Here's what happened according to the doctors speaking under oath.

"The coffin was opened in the presence of the Bishop of Nevers, the mayor of the town, his principal deputy, several canons and ourselves. We noticed no smell. The body was clothed in the habit of Bernadette's order. The habit was damp. Only the face, hands and forearms were uncovered."

"The head was tilted to the left. The face was dull white. The skin clung to the muscles and the muscles adhered to the bones. The eye sockets were covered by the eyelids. The brows were flat on the skin and stuck to the arches above the eyes. The lashes of the right eyelid were stuck to the skin. The nose was dilated and shrunken. The mouth was open slightly and it could be seen that the teeth were still in place. The hands, which were crossed on her breast, were perfectly preserved, as were the nails. The hands still held a rusting rosary. The veins on the forearms stood out."

"Like the hands, the feet were wizened and the toenails were still intact (one of them was torn off when the corpse was washed). When the habits had been removed and the veil lifted from the head, the whole of the shrivelled body could be seen, rigid and taut in every limb with skin like parchment. It was found that the hair, which had been cut short, was stuck to the head and still attached to the skull, that the ears were in a state of perfect preservation, that the left side of the body was slightly higher than the right from the hip up. The stomach had caved in and was taut like the rest of the body. It sounded like cardboard when struck. The left knee was not as large as the right. The ribs protruded as did the muscles in the limbs."

"So rigid was the body that it could be easily rolled over and back for washing. The lower parts of the body had turned slightly black. This seems to have been the result of the carbon of which quite large quantities were found in the coffin."

"In witness of which we have duly drawn up this present statement in which all is truthfully recorded."

Nevers, September 22, 1909, Drs. Ch. David, A. Jourdan.

It's odd that Bernadette's head rested to the left hand side. Corpses do not move and she should have went rigid soon after death. Did the Church switch her body with a fresher one that had been treated and preserved?

Extraordinary as this is, the shrinking of the nose, hands, feet, stomach, the sticking of the eyelashes, and above all the rigidity of the body show that there had to be some natural cause. If it was supernatural it wasn't the work of God. Curiously, the nuns who witnessed this noticed that her arms in the coffin had moved from when she was buried and how the forearms came to be bare when before they were covered in the sleeves of a habit has never been explained. Some suspicious people would think tampering took place and the body had been secretly treated to preserve it. What all the carbon was doing there – or was it really carbon? – is another question.

Joe Nickell observes that the emaciated state of Bernadette's corpse indicates that she was probably in the early stages of mummification (page 52, *The Jesus Relics*). No tests for embalming fluid have been performed.

The body had gained a lot of blackness in the hours in which it was exposed to the air. This suggests that the airtightness of the tomb had a role to play in protecting the body.

The Church finds it strange that the decay of the body didn't take place when the decay of the rosary held by the corpse did especially when the habit it was buried in was damp. But as we have seen, bodies in damp graves can mummify.

The 1919 report which followed another exhumation is more interesting.

"When the coffin was opened the body appeared to be absolutely intact and odourless."

Doctor Talon reported: "There was no smell of putrefaction and none of those present experienced any discomfort. The body is practically mummified, covered with patches of mildew and quite a notable layer of salts, which appear to be calcium salts. The skeleton is complete, and it was possible to carry the body to a table without any trouble. The skin has disappeared in some places, but it is still present on most parts of the body. Some of the veins are still visible."

Here is a translation: "There was no odour and it looked almost mummified. It was covered with damp patches and a significant amount of salts which seemed to be calcific salts. The corpse is complete. The skin has vanished in some areas. But most of the corpse has skin and some veins can be seen," (*Le Corps de Sainte Bernadette*, Nevers, 1991) and see also page 337, *Bernadette of Lourdes* by Therese Taylor).

In the ten years since the last exhumation, Bernadette's body had obviously deteriorated. And we must remember that mummification is not a sign of miraculous activity. It is a sign of slowed down decay. A mummified body is a body that has decayed well just like one might say that the well preserved Joan Collins has aged well!

Doctor Comte's report :

"At the request of the Bishop of Nevers I detached and removed the rear section of the fifth and sixth right ribs as relics; I noted that there was a resistant, hard mass in the thorax, which was the liver covered by the diaphragm. I also took a piece of the diaphragm and the liver beneath it as relics, and can affirm that this organ was in a remarkable state of preservation. I also removed the two patella bones to which the skin clung and which were covered with more clinging calcium matter. Finally, I removed the muscle fragments right and left from the outsides of the thighs. These muscles were also in a very good state of preservation and did not seem to have putrefied at all."

"From this examination I conclude that the body of the Venerable Bernadette is intact, the skeleton is complete, the muscles have atrophied, but are well preserved; only the skin, which has shrivelled, seems to have suffered from the effects of the damp in the coffin. It has taken on a grayish tinge and is covered with patches of mildew and quite a large number of crystals and calcium salts, but the body does not seem to have putrefied, nor has any decomposition of the cadaver set in, although this would be expected and normal after such a long period in a vault hollowed out of the earth."

Nevers, April 3, 1919, Dr. Comte

This doesn't sound like a miracle but more like a mummified skeleton! We must remember that when Bernadette was first buried she was buried in a lead coffin. Like John XXIII, this would have helped to preserve the body. Since the body was preserved for so long naturally, it hardened and hardened items last longer and the hardening itself helps to preserve the body. In 1909, the body was buried in a new lead coffin lined with white silk.

Bernadette declared revulsion for all worldly things when she became a nun taking vows of poverty. Would she agree with

being buried like somebody special in a lead coffin? Or getting special treatment?

In 1925 the third and last exhumation of the body took place. The doctor said he wished to open the chest to the neck to take some of her ribs as relics and he wanted to remove the heart. He didn't remove the heart because "of the inclination of the trunk to the left arm it would have been hard to remove the heart without making very large and destructive incisions." Clearly, the arm had become part of the trunk. She was immovable.

The Church does not claim that the preservation of the corpse is a miracle. It says it is odd that the body survived so well considering Bernadette was virtually rotting alive.

Also, the Church said the dampness of the habit and the rusted rosary should have meant that the body would decompose. But we read that there were patches of damp on the habit. It was not that wet. Was the dampness just new?

The significant quantity of carbon found on the body in 1909 is telling. The carbon was used to preserve the body as it had an antiseptic effect. The layer of calcareous salts on the body was never analysed or explained.

The Church apologists say that these techniques would have partly helped preserve the body but the excellent preservation still has to be explained. It says that if Bernadette was embalmed she would have been immersed in chemicals including aluminium sulphate for three days at least (page 339, Bernadette of Lourdes, Therese Taylor).

Also the carbon only preserves short-term (page 339, Bernadette of Lourdes, Therese Taylor).

The Church says that Bernadette was displayed from her death on Wednesday to her funeral on Saturday. The embalming would have needed to have been started hours after she died. But as she was displayed all that time there was no chance to do it.

There was certainly time after the funeral to do it. Sceptics have said that the Church had something done to the body to preserve it in the several days between the funeral and the internment. The Church replies that the only reason the body was not buried as it had to have a crypt made for her in the chapel. Therese Taylor relays her view that according to science it was PROBABLY too late then to embalm (page 339, Bernadette of Lourdes). But we know of cases where untreated bodies did not corrupt and turned into mummies. Surely then a body given even a seemingly belated treatment with embalming fluids would have a better chance of surviving?

We must consider the following: the preservation of Bernadette is reasonable. Its not good. Its not wonderful. Its not excellent. Perhaps the embalming was started too late but did the best job it could?

The body of St Bernadette has been on display in its glass case in Nevers since August 3, 1925. The face of Bernadette that looks so natural is in fact a wax mask created by Pierre Imans in Paris. Countless Catholics have been fooled into thinking the beautiful peaceful face is wholly natural!

The Church always says a light mask of wax was made for the face and hands. That is an understatement. The experts had to look at a number of photographs of Bernadette to make the facemask (page 340, Bernadette of Lourdes, Therese Taylor). If she only needed a light covering that would have been unnecessary. And the Church lies that the only reason the mask was put on was because they wanted to hide the darkened skin and the sunken eyes and the damaged nose. There was more than that to hide!

If there wasn't much to hide then experts and the expensive Pierre Imans was not required.

The following photo shows how Bernadette's hands are covered in heaps of wax. The hands are just too smooth. The lips have a waxen or painted appearance. The eyebrows look lighter than they did when Bernadette died.



The picture below is of Bernadette shortly after her death



The Catholic writer, John Thavis, author of *The Vatican Prophecies*, declares how in 1919 the body was suffering from mildew and a lot of skin had rotted away while the rest of it was mummified.

He agrees with sceptics that her case is not a case of true incorruption. The claim that her body is as if she died yesterday is a pack of pious lies. Alarmingly it shows how devout people seem so detached from reality that they would state what can be proven to be untrue. It is a lie no rational person would tell.