

## CATHOLICISM, THE "MIRACLE" OF INCORRUPTIBILITY

The Roman Church says that the corpses of some of its saints are incorruptible - flawlessly preserved even for centuries. That is a deliberate lie because the incorruptibles are simply bodies that decay very very slowly

A miracle is a supernatural event. It like God doing magic. Religionists who are on the quest to experience miracles open themselves wide to deception. St John of the Cross had plenty to say about that. Also, they evidently think their religion is so ridiculous that they need to see miracle or a sign from God before they can manage to believe.

The Catholic Church reports the miracle of incorruptibility. This is when a picture or religious item and most often the body of a holy person should have decayed away and didn't. This seems to be a testable and permanent miracle. Or is it?

The Church says that the miracle is intended by God to show his approval for the example and teaching of the incorrupt person. A person can do this in an amazing way and not be a saint. The miracle then is thought to show approval not so much for the person but for their orthodoxy. God is really saying, "I preserve your body as a sign that your teaching about me was correct."

The desperation of some Catholics to see miracles where there is only mummifications is disconcerting. Even a devout Catholic psychologist would have to admit they suffer from a form of religious delusion and need help.

### INCORRUPTIBILITY

Hambo Lama Itigelov was a Buddhist monk who died in 1927. He was exhumed in 2002 and found to be mummified. The preservation of the body was found to have been down to bromide salts and salt. Nevertheless he is considered to be supernaturally incorrupt.

Certain Catholic saints and blessed are alleged to have been miraculously preserved after death for years.

The best book, in a sense for its not very scientific, on the subject is Joan Carroll Cruz's book, *The Incorruptibles*. The book is credulous for it treats cases that can no longer be examined as authentic and makes errors. However, she does tell us that in some places and circumstances that should not mummify corpses and preserve them actually do it despite all the odds (page 333). Nature has strange ways at times. Yet she - a layperson not an expert - says the saints' preservation is miraculous for they don't get hard and dry and stiff like natural mummies. Many of the corpses have a nice smell indicating that some kind of embalming fluid was used. St Philip Neri and St Charles Borromeo were found to have been embalmed (page 87, *Looking for a Miracle*). Autopsies have never been done to determine whether the likes of St Bernadette were embalmed. Many of the bodies get black and hard and some parts of them rot.

The alleged miracle of incorruptibility is an affront to God for it attributes half-miracles to him. Sometimes God has to be even helped - really? Thought he was almighty!

The incorrupt body of St Angela Merici had to be treated for preservation in 1930.

Cruz forgets that the bodies of saints were often treated with preservatives as soon as the saint died so that the body would be able to be kept for longer for public viewing before burial. Another reason why devotees wanted saint's bodies to last longer was so that relics such as the heart and so on could be taken.

The body of St Zita (probably born 1212 - 27th April 1272) is preserved. She was born in Italy. When she was about 12, she got employment as a servant in the Fatinelli household. Her employers and the other servants hated her for her hard work and kindness. They constantly abused and maltreated her and gave her too much work to do. She refused to stand up for herself and assert her rights. In time, she was loved by the family. The pope canonised her in 1696. No doubt her refusal to respect herself and to let others trample over her made her appealing to the Church which wanted to make an example of her.

Pope John XXIII got treated with formalin and was in an airtight coffin that was made of lead, zinc or both which help delay decomposition. That was why he was well preserved when he was taken out of his tomb in March 2001 despite being dead for 37 years. The Vatican rejected the thought that it was a miracle. Cardinal Noe declared that the body was kept airtight and that the pope was not buried long enough for his preservation to be remarkable. The evil monster, Pope Boniface VIII, was found intact over three hundred years after his burial. It was checked on in the 1830s and found there

was nothing left but the bones. The Cardinal mentioned that case as if to show that incorruptibility need not be a miracle when such an unholy pope was found incorrupt!

The Miraculous Medal visionary, St Catherine Laboure, has been considered to be among the incorruptibles and her body is still on display today. Some Catholic sources say that St Catherine Laboure was embalmed. I once saw a book called *Madonnas of Europe* that made this claim. Embalming could have been done and forgotten about in a lot of cases. In Catherine's case, the hands completely rotted away and had to be replaced by wax hands indicating that her preservation is no miracle and she probably was embalmed. If you look at the photos, which have not been retouched, of the corpse of Catherine Laboure in the book, *St Catherine Laboure and the Miraculous Medal* you will see she had a shrunken face and was very old looking. Yet the picture of her corpse has fresh full features with eyes open and excellent skin and she looks like a woman of 35. Either the body is a wax figure put there by the crafty Catholic Church or her body has disintegrated a bit and has had to be repaired with wax.

Padre Pio was exhumed decades after his death. Pio's corpse was declared incorrupt by the people though Gabrielli who exhumed him declared it was far from incorrupt though in a fairly good condition. Gabrielli prepared the body for display by adding preservatives and resin. Pio's face was passable and he recommended a veil could be used to conceal its imperfection. But eventually Gems Studio in London was commissioned to make a mask from silicon in order to make Pio lifelike and presentable.

In 1961 in Wales a Methodist chapel was demolished to make way for some new developments. A coffin was found in the debris. The police and the pathologist arrived and in the presence of six people the coffin was opened and inside was a girl in a green dress who was perfectly preserved. She was Ann Powys who had died in 1820. She committed suicide because her fiancé jilted her soon before they were to be married. The suicide note was buried with her and it asked God to preserve her to reproach the man who had jilted her. There was a report in the coffin that she had lain in an open coffin in her home for nearly a month and no smell or decaying took place. The pathologist could find no reason why the body should have failed to decompose. The body was buried later in a cemetery and a headstone erected. Gareth Davies who seemed to be a descendant of her fiancé paid for the headstone. One thing is for sure, the girl did not know why her man had dumped her for she wrote that he gave her no reason and yet she talks in terms of reproach and humiliation. Not very Christian. And why would God preserve her when the man was dead? She wasn't preserved to punish him! And when she wrote her note she was not compelled to kill herself for she had sufficient presence of mind so in Christian terms she would have been a sinner. She thereby indicated that if her preservation was supernatural that it need not be God's work.

In 1782, the body of Catherine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII, was found in an amazing state of preservation at Sudeley Castle for someone that had been 250 years dead. The skin on her arm was found to be as fresh and white as she was in life. Her coffin had been found by a man called John Locust who gave this testimony. He took some locks of her hair. One of her arms was white and moist. The body was "entire and uncorrupted" (page 338, *Bernadette of Lourdes* by Therese Taylor). He buried her again. In 1817 nothing but a skeleton remained. Source wikipedia.

Evil Mary Tudor was found intact and uncorrupted during Victorian times (page 339, *Bernadette of Lourdes* by Therese Taylor).

The *Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* by Father Herbert Thurston page 254 relates an account of an incorrupt body being found in a grave that was opened in a churchyard that hadn't been used in living memory. The story was about a girl found incorrupt in England. This happened outside the context of sanctity or Catholicism. Many incorrupt bodies of ordinary people who had been interred for a long time were exhumed in Paris 1765 despite being in damp soil.

Joe Nickell in *The Jesus Relics* states that some of the bodies believed to be miraculously incorrupt were investigated and it was found that they had been embalmed (page 50). He states how the body of St Charles Borromeo who died in 1584 was embalmed and was never put in the ground. Instead, the Church carefully made sure it was protected from humidity and air to preserve it.

The body of St Philip Neri was also embalmed though the Church let people think it was miraculous. The miraculous perfume emanating from this body could be perfumed preservatives (page 51).

A body can be put into a damp grave and it can either decompose or start to mummify in a leatherly fashion (page 52).

Because the Catholic Church knows that the evil Cardinal Shuster who was once Archbishop of Milan and was a support of Mussolini and his brand of fascism and who died in 1954 was found incorrupt in the grave after 31 years, and Buddhist Monks and yogis have also escaped decay for no known reason it is reluctant to see incorruptibility as a sign from God. It is lay Catholic fanatics and some priests who make a fuss about incorruptibility being a sign from God. The *X Factor* Issue 26 page 718 (Marshall Cavendish, 1997) contains photos of people who were preserved for a long time after death. It displays the photograph of a child called Rosalina Lombardo which was taken seventy years after her burial - she was buried in

1920 and she is perfectly preserved. The child never had any prospects of being a saint. The eyes and the eyelids are perfectly preserved which is unusual though there is no doubt that the child was embalmed. Embalming shouldn't normally enable the whole body to stay preserved. But the method was a mystery until recently and the doctor who did the embalming didn't leave any explanation behind him. The magazine also reminds us that there is any number of ordinary people who were not religious like saints whose bodies were untouched by decay (page 717).

Rosalia looked incredible in 1995. Zinc salts have been determined to have been the chief cause of her remarkable preservation. However the result was that the body became so rigid that it could stand up by itself. If the fact that Doctor Salafia embalmed her had been kept secret she might have ended up being paraded by Catholics as a miracle. Her preservation was unexplained until recently and Catholics like to see miracles where something is not explained. And the preservation was only explained when the doctor's notes surfaced which outlined how he performed the preservation. Her rigidity reminds us of the petrified corpse of Bernadette of Lourdes.

Evil Catholic saint, Joseph Calasanctius, who covered up clerical child abuse in the Piarist order, was rewarded with canonisation by Pope Clement XIII in 1767. He was declared in 1948 by Pope Pius XII to be "Universal Patron of all Christian schools in the world." His heart and tongue are kept in Rome by the Piarist order and are incorrupt. Canonisations are believed to be infallible so the Catholic God clearly approves then of a man who was worse than any modern covering up bishop in his callousness towards the victims of abuse. He protected Fr Cherubini despite documenting the priest's activities with children. And he did this to safeguard the reputation of the Piarists who masqueraded as altruists in the education of young boys.

About 165, years after his beheading, the exhumed head of King Charles I was examined by Sir Henry Halford, the Royal Surgeon who made the following record, "

The complexion of the skin was dark and discolored. The forehead and temples had lost little or nothing of their muscular substance; the cartilage of the nose was gone; but the left eye, in the first moment of exposure, was open and full, though it vanished almost immediately: and the pointed beard, so characteristic of this period of the reign of King Charles, was perfect. [The head] was quite wet, and gave a greenish-red tinge to paper and to linen which touched it. The back part of the scalp . . . had a remarkably fresh appearance. The hair was thick . . . and in appearance nearly black".

Leonie van den Dijck a fake visionary of Onkerzele in Belgium claimed that her stigmatised incorrupt body would be found after her death. It is hearsay that this was indeed found to be the case in the exhumations of 1972 and ten years later.

In China, mummies with European features up to 4000 years old were found in the Tarim Basin desert thirty years ago. They are so well preserved and preserved much better than many incorrupt Catholic saints who are mere centuries old that they look as if they are recently dead. Their clothes were remarkably preserved as well. One mummy had an intact goose feather in her hat.

The best ever preserved corpse is that of Xin Zhui which was found in China in 1971. Her death is dated to 178–145 BC. She seems to have been about 50. An autopsy found that she seemed to be only a short time dead. They found her organs were intact. Her blood was still red in her veins. Nobody knows for sure what was responsible for such a remarkable preservation. Her airtight coffin is thought to have contributed to it. A liquid in the coffin in a shade of red may explain the mystery but nobody knows what it is. The bodies of her neighbours Sui Xiaoyuan and Ling Huiping are similarly well preserved. Xin's body is kept in the Hunan Provincial Museum. She proves that bodies can be inexplicably preserved without accounting for it with the supernatural.

Bernadette of Lourdes' body has been coated in wax. She died in 1879.

"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."  
1909

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."

The imperfections prove whatever is going on is not a miracle but a case of mummification.

The Church put wax on the carcass to make it look good.

Last

The rules of Prosper Lambertini who became Pope Benedict XIV categorically deny that any corpse that has been treated in any way to keep it fresh should be thought of as miraculously incorrupt.

When I was a Catholic, the phenomenon of incorruptibility was one of the bedrocks of my faith. Had I had the internet then to research, it would have been very different. I would have been less impressed by the Church. The phenomenon is unusual but that isn't enough to make it a miracle or a sign from God. The Catholics use it as a sign that somebody is a saint or that God is recommending that person's Catholic faith and no other faith. This is effrontery. And arrogant bias as well. To them, when a Catholic is the subject of this preservation it is a miracle. When a non-religious person or a Protestant is the subject, it is not a miracle but a phenomenon.

One last thought: There is no such thing as a saint's corpse that remains the same way for decades, that keeps looking like it just died! All of the bodies are unpleasant to look at in their natural state. None of them are flexible. Do not forget that if a corpse looks remarkably good through mummification or whatever that this is not incorruption. Mummification is just a form of decomposition or desiccation. The corpse is just decomposing well for its age!

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