

## KNOCK - Is the Miracle of the Dry Gable True?



The above picture from 1880, the year after the "apparition" is interesting. The exact spot where the Virgin stood at an apparition site is extremely important to Catholics. It seems safe to assume that as the witnesses of the apparition would have been consulted the statue of Mary does indeed mark the spot though it seems to be higher up than the Virgin would have been. But you can be sure it is positioned over the spot. The statue is of our Lady of Lourdes. It has not been noted how similar the Knock virgins pose was to statues of Our Lady of Lourdes. Both are depicted as looking up to heaven and praying with hands parted and held up to the chest. The statue depicted is a fair size and would pass for life size if it were not for the people standing beside it if you are standing where the photographer stood. Remember the witnesses stood at a further distance away though a couple went close briefly and observed that the entities were statues. Could it be that somebody put statues at the gable? Did somebody put a crown on a statue of Our Lady of Lourdes and plot it at the gable with a light shining on it which would have made it look more mystical? Imagination played a role and always does. The Church recognises this and says that even if an apparition is real and believable that does not mean that everything said by the witness is necessarily true. It is possible that a statue of Mary and St Patrick (mistaken for St John) was used. A witness however stated that the St John image resembled a statue of St John at Lecanvey.

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).

The people saw white images. The witnesses referred to them as statues. Nobody saw them coming or going. The witnesses claimed that they all left the vision and that when they came back to the spot, there was nothing to be seen there only the rain battering against the gable.

The witnesses left depositions. We know there would be at least small errors or exaggerations in the depositions. The only thing that stands out as miraculous is the allegation that the grass below the apparition and the gable wall were dry despite the long and heavy rain going in that direction.

The notion that the gable was miraculously sheltered from the torrential rain going in its direction has grown in importance among believers in Knock.

It is deployed to refute the notion that the images were phosphorus cut outs. The rain would make the paint run.

It is deployed to refute the notion that if a light beam was used to keep the phosphorus bright and to make it look brighter the beam would have been interrupted by the rain.

It is deployed to refute the notion that the whole vision was simply a trick for it was produced by magic lantern or projector. It is surmised that the light beam again would have been interrupted by the rain.

But the miracle of the dry gable is a hoax.

It is claimed that the ground below the vision was dry.

The ancient witness who supposedly said the ground was miraculously dry below the apparition would have wet hands. Her hands were already wet so how reliable was her discovery that the ground was dry? If you expect the ground to be dry and your hands are wet then you will think the ground is dry. Perhaps a shelter that wasn't seen was attached to the wall by the

hoaxer to keep the prosperous figures dry? Or was a sheet of glass used as a light source used to project images on to it or to light up images already on it? Did the glass protect the ground from the rain?

Bridget Trench, was that witness. The Church tells us, that she tried to touch the Virgin's feet but there was nothing there. However she never made such a claim. Her testimony was rewritten by fraudsters. Anyway suppose the testimony as we have it in the popular books really is authentic. Her hands just touched the wall which suggests that the image of the feet was on the wall and not in front of it. She felt the ground below the vision and it was dry despite the torrential rainfall that was happening. But we are not told if she just touched one part of the ground so she failed to prove that she hadn't touched a part of the ground that was sheltered from the rain beating against the gable by the people being in the way of the rain. Or perhaps the long grass had protected the ground from getting wet.

She was soaked to the skin so how could her wet hands tell her for sure the ground at the gable was dry? It would be a natural assumption to make that if the Virgin was at your gable in the rain that no rain would fall there. As our memories reconstruct the past rather than record it maybe she imagined the gable was dry in the days after the event. She never mentioned the lamb or the altar. But this may have been due to her assertion that her attention was all on the Virgin Mary.

The images were said to be standing on the tips of the grass. It was no wonder she found the ground dry under the grass for it might have sheltered the ground! If they were real statues then we have another explanation for the dry ground!

Her real testimony goes,

LIVES IN THIS PLACE. ON THE EVE OF 21 AUGUST A PERSON SICK SENT FOR HER THAT SHE MIGHT SEE HER. SHE CAME THAT EVENING TO THE CHURCH [SOMETHING ERASED]. SHE WAS IN THE HOUSE OF THE SICK WOMAN. SHE CAME BY THE ROAD AND SAW GREAT LIGHT. SHE ENTERED AT HER RIGHT HAND. SHE LEFT HER HAND ON THEM. SHE SAW ST JOSEPH AND THE BVM AND ST JOHN AND THE ALTAR AND THE LAMB. THEY WERE NOT STANDING ON THE GROUND BUT PROBABLY TWO FEET ABOVE THE GROUND.

She said the vision was probably two feet above the ground. This does not give us much confidence in her reported claim that she went up to the vision and examined the ground below it carefully.

Was the gable itself dry?

The gable being dry during the apparition is supposedly a miracle. The witnesses said it was an extremely dark night. If that is true then how did they know the rain was hitting the gable after the vision ended?

The only real indicator of a miracle in Trench's account is how the wind and the rain going in the direction of the gable didn't affect it. It was reportedly dry as was the ground at the gable. Nobody else, in a deposition, said that the rain was in the direction of the gable. It is strange that the priests didn't seek corroboration for her claim. Perhaps she didn't make the claim or she was mistaken. Why did some of the other witnesses claim that the images did not get wet instead of saying the gable was dry?

The dryness of the gable could be explained by the fact that it may not have been raining all the time and the wind could have dried the gable. No testimony says it rained all the time except one. Hill says, "For the space of one hour and a half we were under the pouring rain ; at this time I was very wet ; I noticed that the rain did not wet the figures which appeared before me, although I was wet myself; I went away then." Perhaps the rain did wet the gable and changed direction and the wind dried it.

Judith Campbell said, "Though it was raining, the place in which the figures [ORIGINAL SAYS statues] appeared was quite [this quite is significant - it indicates that merely that the area should have been wetter than what it appeared or than what she expected. It undermines the claim that the area was completely and miraculously dry] dry." She does not mention if the gable was dry.

Mary Mc Loughlin said she and others stood at the gable of the school house - see picture. Bridget Trench's alleged testimony claimed that the rain went in the direction of the gable which miraculously stayed dry. If the rain had really been in the direction of the chapel gable Mc Loughlin would have sheltered on the other side of the school house. A few liars among the witnesses makes liars of them all for they refused to expose the liars.

The vision only occupied a small part of the large gable. It would seem unnecessary for God to stop rain touching the gable except where they were standing.

The fabricated Trench testimony agrees, " It was raining very heavily at the time, but no rain fell where the figures were, I

felt the ground carefully with my hands, and it was perfectly dry. The wind was blowing from the south, right against the gable of the chapel, but no rain fell on that portion of the gable or chapel in which the figures were." So it is claimed that there was rain falling on the gable albeit part of it.

Margaret Beirne reportedly testified, "It was pitch dark and raining heavily, and still there was not one drop of rain near the images." This does not ask for a miraculous explanation. Had she considered it wonderful she would have elaborated that the rain was in the direction of the images. If you view the original transcript of her testimony, that sentence is in it but strangely omitted from the published account given by McPhilpin. Was it because she was denying it publicly? It had to have been. It was however in Sullivan's version.

The assertion attributed to Bridget Trench, "The wind was blowing from the south" meaning against the gable from her fabricated testimony contradicts the assertion of Mary Beirne to The Weekly News of 1880 that there was no wind. Why was the wind lied about? The reason must have been that if there was rain it was not in the direction of the gable and the wind was invented to explain how the gable should be wet. The wind was invented to direct the rain at the gable.

Trench's fabricated account IS THE ONLY ONE THAT STATES THAT THE RAIN SHOULD HAVE HIT THE GABLE! THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT THE GABLE SHOULD HAVE BEEN WET. WORSE, THE REAL TRENCH TESTIMONY DOES NOT MENTION RAIN AT ALL! IF THE RAIN SHOULD HAVE BEEN WETTING THE GABLE THE WITNESSES WOULD HAVE SAID INSTEAD OF SETTLING JUST FOR SAYING IT WAS RAINING. THEY DO NOT SAY THERE WAS ANYTHING ODD ABOUT THE IMAGES STAYING DRY OR APPEARING TO. AND NOBODY SPENT MUCH TIME LOOKING AT THEM CLOSE UP - NEARLY EVERYBODY KEPT FAR AWAY SO HOW CAN THEY BE SURE?

There is no reason to hold that any of the gable was really dry in the sense that it kept dry despite the rain going at it.

What about the figures being dry?

The rain not falling on the figures is seemingly impressive. It would look that way if one couldn't get close enough. And some of the witnesses did see flashing lights like tiny stars. Sounds like rain catching the light-source causing the apparition.

Hill - "the upper parts of the crown appeared to be a series of sparkles, or glittering crosses".

Mary Beirne "On the body of the Lamb, and around it, I saw golden stars, or small brilliant lights, glittering like jets or glass balls, reflecting the light of some luminous body".

Margaret her sister says, "I saw an altar there ; it was surrounded with a bright light, nay, with a light at times sparkling, [THIS HIGHLIGHTED PART IS NOT IN THE ORIGINAL BUT PERHAPS SHE STILL SAID IT] and so too were the other figures [statues in the original manuscript - ORIGINAL "AS WELL AS ALL THE STATUES"], which were similarly surrounded." The light source then was clearly affected by the rain.

Images made of light would not get wet naturally! If glass was protecting the images that would explain why they looked dry.

Was the man, Walsh, who was out on his land in the dark and saw the light at Knock Church in the distance telling the truth? Would he have been out if it were that wet? He was sixty five years of age and said it was "raining heavily". But did he? We do not have his original script.

Conclusion

The miracle of the dry gable at Knock is nonsense. When so many lies have appeared after the vision and because of it it makes us wonder how much of the apparition story itself is true. We do not know for sure if the rain wet the gable or how long it rained or even if it rained much. We must remember that the story of the heavy rain battering the gable suits those who want to deny the image was a painting or a magic lantern or some other kind of hoax.

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