

The problem of the "cures" at Knock

About 15 people said they saw the Blessed Virgin Mary appear in a great light flanked by St Joseph and supposedly St John at the gable wall of the Roman Catholic Church in Knock on the 21st August 1879. A lamb standing on an altar was also reported. A cross was standing behind the altar.

Cures were reported and the Archdeacon of Knock kept the letters from people allegedly cured.

Even by the bad standards of the 19th Century the Church was unable to verify any of the cures that took place as authentic miracles in 1882. But that didn't stop it from saying they were happening.

Marion Carroll claims to have been miraculously cured of Multiple Sclerosis at Knock. She was never officially diagnosed. However, for 17 years, she had had many of the symptoms of Multiple Sclerosis including bladder dysfunction, vision problems and inability to walk. The Lourdes Medical Bureau would never accept her account as miraculous. The rules of Pope Benedict XIV state that if a diagnosis is in doubt, then any claim that an illness was miraculously cured can also be doubted. In Catholic standards, the miracle is not genuine.

The cure coincided with her being blessed with the communion wafer during Mass. After Mass she was walking. There is nothing in this to suggest that she was miraculously cured. If it were a miracle, it could be said to be a miracle of the Mass and not necessarily of the Virgin Mary's presence at Knock. Perhaps it had anything to do with Knock as such. It might have been the power of the wafer if you believe in that sort of thing.

In 2019, Knock declared that no earthly explanation existed for Marion's cure. Dr Diarmuid Murray stated, "It would be fair to say she has been cured of neurological symptoms but not of MS. It seems to me that Mrs Carroll had medically unexplained symptoms which have now, thankfully, resolved." That did not stop Archbishop Neary and Fr Richard Gibbons making a few exaggerations to promote the shrine! At least they did not proclaim it a clear miracle! Unexplained and miracle need not go together!

The Lourdes miracle cures are dubious when looked at very closely. But they are more impressive than any cure thing that ever was reported at Knock. You might think some of the Knock cures were very impressive. But they don't count for much as the Church never officially accepted them the way it did the miracles at Lourdes.

