

LOURDES - DUBIOUS HEALINGS

[Peer Journal shows no evidence that anything unnatural was involved in Lourdes Miracles](#)

Whoever asserts that a miracle healing has happened when it has not been verified or in some cases even checked is as good as giving false hope. Whoever lies that it has happened is doing much much worse. Lies lead to lies and hurt and draw more victims in. Real hope means being grounded in reality otherwise it is just foolishness.

Nobody with a withered eye gets a new one. Not one single amputee is healed. Why are all the miracles of healing subject to at least the small possibility that natural causes did it? It is clear that a low level of false hope is being offered.

If miracles happen sparingly at a place should you send your patients therefore cures in case tomorrow they will happen to far more people. Maybe. Medicine has to take the just in case seriously. Lourdes being a place where the sick and infectious congregate is in danger of being dangerously epidemic. Suppose nothing like that happened at Lourdes. Medicine has to ignore that. Oddly even if there are cures at Lourdes it still qualifies as superstition - harmful faith.

Professor Kenesi, who investigates alleged miracles of healing at Lourdes, of Lourdes International Medical Committee, says:

In Committee, we so often hear this phrase: "Do you guarantee one hundred percent that this is a miracle?" The answer is: "Absolutely not."

Despite the seriousness of our work, the redoubling of tests, the long duration of observation, some uncertainty still persists. Our role, in LIMC, is to make it as small as possible. But we do not reduce it to zero. This is an admission of ignorance on our part. We do not claim to know everything, nor do we to explain everything one hundred percent. It is typical of all human affairs.

Lourdes is famous for its miracles though despite the millions that go there, and the countless miracle claims, only 69 (up to the year 2015) have been declared officially to be sound examples of possible miracles. The miracle reports were more common in decades gone by. The reason for that is that improvements in medical science are refuting miraculous explanations. The miraculous is heading towards redundancy.

The Catholic Church when it tries to verify that miracles of healing happened at Lourdes finds it far from easy. But ordinary people have the right to see the evidence before believing and do not have the time for examining all that. A true miracle would be straightforward. Otherwise people are going to get conned and fall into error.

Today, it is known that cancer can vanish and go into remission. Cancer remissions relating to Lourdes are no more remarkable than the remissions that have nothing to do with religion at all. "In the medical literature, spontaneous remissions - at least when cancer is involved - are extremely rare. Estimates range from one case in 60,000 to one in 100,000, although a definitive overview of the topic argues that perhaps one patient in 3,000 experiences a spontaneous remission. Moreover, the majority of oncologists believe that an unidentified biological mechanism is at work rather than a true miracle; and current hypotheses favour alterations in the body's cellular, immunological, hormonal, and genetic functioning over psychological mechanisms" page 4, Born to Believe, Andrew Newberg MD and Mark Robert Waldman, Free Press, New York, 2006.

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

The entity asked for a chapel and people to come in procession. She never asked for a massive basilica and shrine. It is interesting that the vision asked Bernadette for a chapel. She did not intend then to work many cures for if you do you will need more than a chapel!

The vision could have been achieved by remote viewing. There is no reason even for a believer in the miraculous visions to hold that Mary actually went to Lourdes. So there is no need for a shrine on the basis that Mary was there for there is no indication at all that she was. The fuss about the shrine and the great crowds going there indicate that Catholics are more interested in heavenly visions than in the message. Its about the magical occult side. They act as if the place became magic since Mary set foot there. Few Catholic pilgrims to Lourdes even know the messages Mary gave or even care. And running to a place where Mary allegedly stood makes no sense if they believe Jesus comes down and takes the form of bread and wine in their parish churches daily.

Though the pilgrims should emphasise Mary's message rather than the visions, they should make a priority of knowing the Pope's teaching. The pope as Vicar of Christ, according to Catholic belief, communicates Christ's truth. Messages from Heaven then are nothing in comparison to what he has to say.

The healings of Lourdes have made it into a super-shrine. Thus it is hard to believe that the Catholic Mary is responsible for these healings. It undermines the Catholic teaching about Jesus in communion and the pope being his spokesman. Mary never promised healings and Bernadette herself said that the cures were nonsense.

Of extreme significance is what Bernadette said to the Jesuit Pere Languade in 1863. He asked her if she had seen the Blessed Virgin. Her reply was that she did not say she seen the Blessed Virgin but she seen the apparition. Clearly she did not regard the alleged cures as miracles that showed Mary had appeared to her.

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.

Lourdes has no credibility as regards visions from God. It is commonly thought that if the apparitions alone are doubtful or seem unconvincing then the authenticating power of the healings of Lourdes makes up for it.

Bernadette never used the miraculous spring or its water even when she was dying. Some say she believed the spring was not for her but she could have tried it and left it up to God. There would be no blasphemy or sin in that. It was an insult to refuse to let God have a chance to cure her through the waters if he wanted to. Bernadette was astonishingly sceptical of the first miracle cures and said that healing had never been mentioned by the vision. This girl was called stupid and gullible. One would expect then that if she was she would have been more open to the miracles. I would take her attitude as evidence that she faked her vision and still won the world over which made her realise that people would convince themselves that any lie was the truth and made her sceptical. Or perhaps gullible people only believe apparitions have no power to heal when they have had no apparition.

As for the allegedly proven miracles of healing at Lourdes which are currently 69 in number they are not as above suspicion as the evidence says and as one would think (page 177, *Believing in God*). Some of the people were examined too long before their alleged cure and there is doubt about the diagnosis of others. The Abbe Fiamma was cured of hideous ulcers on the skin in 1908. The healing was reported to be instant but there is no proof that they were not healed between the last examination the date of which is unknown and his dip in the bath of holy water at Lourdes to which he attributed his cure.

In a small book called *Spiritual Healing* we read that the famous case of John Traynor's cure from epilepsy and paralysis at Lourdes was never recognised by the Church (71-74). Traynor had problems recalling all about his sicknesses after the cure which could have led to the medical experts being confused and thinking there was something inexplicable where there was nothing. They would have depended on his testimony more than on anything else. Traynor died in 1943.

It is said that Delizia Cirollie had a tumour that would kill her on her knee (in fact it is now known it was probably an infection that resembled cancer and that burnt itself out). She went to Lourdes in August 1976 and nothing happened and she was cured in December at home. The tumour disappeared gradually. The Church recognised this as a miracle which was strange. It did not look like a miracle. The cure was not at Lourdes nor was it instant. The Church had decreed that a cure had to be instant. There are many mysteries about cancer (89) and they are enough to prevent one being too surprised if cancer disappears. The Medical Bureau could not come to a consensus on what was wrong with her. Years later it was claimed by some of them that she had Ewing's Tumour that nobody had been known to recover from (76). This disease is so rare and obviously hard to diagnose as the Bureau's problems with it show that one wonders what grounds they have for declaring that once one has it they are stuck with it until it kills them. Diagnoses after the event and when nobody could come to a definite consensus at the time of sickness remain unconvincing.

On the Channel 4 documentary of 1998, *The Miracle Police*, it was revealed that the disease could have been tubercular or a strange infection that burnt out for the reports and x-rays are capable of different interpretations. The knee was not examined properly between Lourdes and December. Also, the girl seemed to be dying because the tumour was untreated. Would the Virgin Mary send a miracle in a case where the child should have had the leg amputated and did not do it? It implies approval for this carelessness and stubbornness.

The girl's Archbishop as always got the medical reports and pronounced it a miracle. Now what would a bishop know? Only scientists and doctors have the right to say if something is a miracle. They wouldn't but it is more their right to say it than the bishop's. And even then only those of them that know enough of the relevant material would have the right for every expert meets things he or she will have difficulty with for he or she cannot know everything but has to pretend to.

The miracle exploits science and then it disregards it as if it were nothing. The miracle could be interpreted as satanic for all these reasons if it was a miracle. And the Lourdes' Bureau said it was the best case they had examined which reflects badly on the other cures it declared inexplicable. And all doctors know that what is inexplicable need not be a miracle.

A book published in 1957 called Eleven Lourdes Miracles by Dr D J West showed that the healed people probably had not been diagnosed accurately and it was not certain that the cures were triggered by Lourdes and the role of suggestion was not excluded for the records were kept in insufficient detail (Spiritual Healing, page 79). I would add that if records are badly kept then there could be outright blunders in which fiction is reported as fact.

The Lourdes Medical Bureau has proclaimed some cures to be impossible to explain and other medical bodies have checked their work and found explanations for them (page 150, Looking for a Miracle). This is not surprising for medicine requires a lot of interpreting and is subject to scrutiny by people with different opinions. A woman was once found to be miraculously free of a disease and yet some years later she died from it! The Encyclopaedia Britannica reported that American doctors found the documentation in favour of a 1976 inexplicable cure to be equivocal and unscientific (page 151). It is strange that God says miracles are signs meaning that he will ensure they are verified and then does little about such false misleading claims. Most people would believe them simply because they haven't even realised that there could be another side to the stories.

It is no wonder that the medical reports that verify healings that are taken as miracles showing the Church should canonise people invoked for the cures as saints are highly confidential in the Vatican. We protest against this. The cured people will talk about what happened so what is the Vatican hiding? What is the pope and his curia afraid of?

Catholic teaching insists that Jesus said that if he will do a miracle you must have strong faith first. What about Catholic devotees and priests encouraging sick people to believe they can and will be cured so that the door to a miracle can be opened? It is sick! No longer must they be able to say, "We promise Lourdes will heal the heart and that is the real miracle." No longer must they be able to say, "Real healings are rare but Lourdes heals through a placebo and it does not matter how somebody gets better as long as they do". Both of these are still giving false hope and putting people in emotional danger. To promise a placebo is quite cruel and even worse than promising that a real miracle might happen. The good at Lourdes is what we hear about. That is dishonest. There is another side. It is a dark side that makes promoting it totally unjustifiable.

It actually crueler to promise a definite or possible miracle cure in the sense of finding peace than a physical one. The Church certainly does that when it invites people to Lourdes. Lourdes needs to present failed miracles as well as real ones. Until that is done it is cheating. It is not giving an honest picture and that is not fair on anybody who is ill and goes there. It is the principle.

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