

## IS THERE INDEPENDENT NEUTRAL EVIDENCE THAT THERE ARE VISIONS AT MEDJUGORJE?

Has the Virgin Mary, under the title of Our Lady, Queen of Peace been appearing in Medjugorje in the former Yugoslavia since 1981? Six young people have reported these visions and have been subjected to tests.

Scientific and Medical Studies on the Apparitions at Medjugorje was written by Fr Rene Laurentin and Professor Henri Joyeux of the University of Montpellier. It was published by Veritas, Dublin in 1987. The book says that the apparitions are real and definitely miraculous.

Fr Michael O Carroll was another defender of the alleged apparitions. He wrote Medjugorje, Facts Documents Theology.

### *O Carroll and Science*

A test to see if the visionaries responded to the visions at the same time was conducted and involved an electro-oculogram test, involving the wily Joyeux, on alleged visionaries Ivan and Marija dated December 28, 1984. "The movement of the eyeballs of both youngsters reportedly showed simultaneity to the second in the cessation of movement at the beginning of the ecstasy and again, simultaneity to the second in the return of movement at the end of the ecstasy." In an interview with Paris Match interview, Joyeux exaggerated the result. He claimed that all the visionaries "des voyants" saw something invisible to other people at the same precise moment. Father Michael O Carroll repeats that lie. Since when did two become all? And there is nothing remarkable about visionaries having a vision at say 5 pm and two of them having it in the same second. It has to happen for they have only seconds to spare.

Chapter 5 of Fr O Carroll's book informs us that Dr Maria Frederica Magatti thought that the ecstasy was genuine and the children were normal.

Dr Lucia Capello found them normal as well and said that she was interested in the synchrononous movements made at the beginning and end of ecstasy that indicated the presence of the Virgin. She stated that the first could be explained by natural causes. But she then she says something strange. She says that they could not naturally do things at the same time as if there was something telling them what to do after that. But if they could do it at the beginning of the vision they could do it at the end too. If they can do it the first time perhaps by signalling to one another they could do it at the end by counting at a practiced rate to say one hundred and then raise their heads to simulate seeing the apparition ascending. Yet O Carroll presents this as proving the apparitions.

In 1984, Dr Mario Botta who was a cardiac surgeon who took a cardiograph of Ivan during ecstasy and found that the ecstasy did not have any very strange attributes. It was medically explicable.

Dr Enzo Gabrici was a neuro-psychiatrist. He found that in the case of Vicka there was no evidence of tiredness after the vision. In hysterical visions tiredness follows. He found no evidence of hallucination in the visionaries. One wonders why he looked only at Vicka and Jacov in depth. If they had to be examined so closely for evidence of hysteria what value does that place on his examination of the rest? He even said that they were not like Spiritualist mediums for they were not taken over by any spirits. But didn't he know that most Spiritualist experiences are not of this kind and that times mediums have been reported to have had mental states that were very unusual just like the Medjugorje visions? They have visions and voices too. He said that the visionaries were not hypnotised for they remember what happens in the trance when they come out of it. But hypnotists can make you remember. Perhaps they do go into a hypnotic trance and have planned earlier in the day what to say happened during the trance.

Perhaps they make up the messages and say they remembered them from the trance. O Carroll needs to get more familiar with rational analysis.

It is interesting that Dr Giorgio Sanguinetti saw the visionaries shake as the vision left. Then they retreated. He did not expect the shuddering so he would not have noticed if they all really started at the same instant in time. The bizarre shuddering suggests that they had to use a crude way to fake synchronicity.

Dr Joyeux said they entered slowly into ecstasy (page 65). He also said that one or more said ode or she is going at the end. This could be prompting to act as if the Lady had just gone out of sight. He admitted that his tests gave no scientific proof that the Virgin was appearing but he did say that what happens to the children during the ecstasy cannot be explained (page 68). But then he described the ecstasy as a state of deep prayer in which they forget about their surroundings (page 69). The

ecstasy is supposed to be the puzzle and first he said there was no explanation and then he gives one, deep prayer! Joyeux said his tests excluded trickery and that the crowds being transformed in Medjugorje excluded it as well. We know by now that the suspicious behaviour of the children speaks louder than any test. And Joyeux is being an unprofessional scientist when he appeals to the fervour of the crowds as an indication of authenticity. That indicates a determination to make the apparitions look inexplicable when he should be emotionally and mentally open to whatever the truth may be.

Would God be more interested in evidencing the miracle of ecstasy than the miracle of the apparition? I doubt it!

In *Looking for a Miracle*, we read that Joyeux's arguments are far from persuasive and they are equivocal (192). They are certainly confused that is for sure. It quotes Laurentin as saying that the children don't go into another state of consciousness but their awareness just gets stronger. Laurentin even dared to write that describing this as ecstasy SEEMED to be correct. He's not sure and he demands that we believe in Medjugorje. Without an inexplicable ecstasy the apparitions are not worth thinking about or testing. He said that the tests failed to prove what the visionaries were saying but did not disprove it either. These startling admissions are to be read on pages 8 and 126 of *Scientific and Medical Studies on the Apparitions at Medjugorje*.

Dr Marco Margnelli was a non-believer who said the children go into alpha but was puzzled by some things. He wanted to do an EEG but he felt that his presence and that of his colleagues annoyed the children causing the three apparitions he was present at to have too short a duration for any good investigation. The neurophysiologist thought that the children were in a deeper state of alpha than could be attained by meditation and based his conclusion that they were not lying on the way they seemed not to react to tests on the senses. He was impressed by videos of the cross disappearing on the hill and the silence of the birds at the time of the apparition. But birds can be sensitive to what humans do. Birds can find it alarming to have lots of noise which then stops. And how often do birds stop for a minute or two anyway? Many of the people would not even notice if the birds were singing and then be led to think the birds stopped. Sadly, the doctor became a good Catholic after being inspired by such superstitious nonsense. After what Joyeux and Laurentin wrote one can hardly expect the Virgin to do such things when she can't make it undeniable that something mystical and magical is happening when she appears. That would be more in line.

*Medjugorje Herald*

*Medjugorje Herald* of February 1999, speaks of four different episodes of tests done in 1998. The last one was a psycho-physiological investigation which was incomplete and therefore of little use for the visionaries would not and said they could not participate fully. Some just didn't want the test full stop. No evidence of mental disorder was found. They wanted to see if the ecstasy had changed since 1985. It was found that the ecstasy was less intense. The doctors were convinced that the ecstasy could be caused by hypnosis. "The hypnotically induced state of ecstasy did not cause the phenomenology of spontaneous experiences and therefore it cannot be deduced that the ecstatic states of spontaneous apparitions were not states of hypnotic trance". The witnesses' ordinary consciousness was tested, their hypnotic state was tested, their state when they visualised strongly was tested and their consciousness during an apparition was tested.

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES DONE ON THE VISIONARIES OF MEDJUGORJE – 1998 SCIENTIFIC STUDY ON THE VISIONARIES admits that the investigation which was on a psycho-physiological basis was incomplete because the subjects, the visionaries, were not keen and a bit uncooperative and complained about family and social obligations that had to be put first. This report ruled out the possibility that the children were hypnotised. But it dishonestly left out the possibility that hypnosis was used to get them to do the other things that seemed usual. In other words, they might not be in hypnotic trances but hypnosis could be used to train and manipulate their behaviour so that they see the Virgin at the exact same time for instance.

All the authorities agree that you cannot be persuaded to do anything you consider immoral in hypnosis. Yet Marija told the ten secrets under hypnosis to Dr Stopar (114, *Scientific and Medical Studies*, etc.). She would not reveal them to him before that in her right mind. Marija was faking for no trick was done to make her think it would be moral to tell and she would not have wanted her reluctance to tell removed. She faked the trance to make it look as if her visions were real which suggests that she was making them up. She was pretending that hypnosis made her tell because she believed what nearly everybody believes is that hypnosis can make you do what you think is bad.

*But Briefly...*

In the documentary *Apparitions of the Virgin Mary* says it (Galaxie Productions, Amaya Films, 2000) we are told by a visionary that the visionaries touched the Virgin the first time she appeared. This is worrying for it made the children relics of the Virgin Mary and elevated them to that state much too quickly. We know how much relics are glorified and adored in the Catholic faith. St John of the Cross taught that we must always fly away from visions for they are so dangerous and make us different from ordinary people and can become like a drug. He said visions are more likely to be false the more corporeal and touchable they are (page 257, 258). According to him a vision that speaks more to the soul than the mind and

emotions and senses are most likely to be from God for it develops spiritually. Nevertheless, I would say that such visions are the only ones that could be from God. Medjugorje is famous for a three-dimensional Virgin who looks, feels and sounds like a normal person so the apparition is not Mary.

How Catholics can regard such a vision as false and say they believe in tangible and material apparitions of Jesus in which the resurrection was revealed is a mystery!

On one occasion Jacov was to touch the apparition under test to see if he was touching anything and he forgot to ask her permission and she left and it was not done. How convenient and why did Mary not remind him when she said that she did not mind the tests? They all looked up at the vision at the one time and no evidence of signalling was found. Perhaps they had electronic devices on their person that jabbed them at the right time or the signal was given earlier and they had to inwardly count at a trained rate so that they would raise their eyes at the exact same moment without any obvious link with the signal. But there are several eyewitness testimonies that the children did act as if they were signalling so that they could get down on their knees to signify that the ecstasy and the vision was happening. Patricia Waters, once a devoted follower of Medjugorje, was interviewed as one such witness on the video Divine or Deceived? The same video provides evidence that the visionaries have been making money and indeed had to have been out of the alleged appearances.

According to Medjugorje Revisited: 30 Years of Visions or Religious Fraud, a test to see if the visionaries could touch the Virgin Mary was devised. It was going to involve filming their hands carefully to see where they stopped. This was to check if there were signs that there was something there. Jakov was up for the test and got out of it by claiming he forgot to ask the Virgin's permission. Ivanka and Marija said the Virgin refused to agree.

The same book reminds us how careless the tests were that were done on the visionaries. The testers said the visionaries were undisturbed by having a card placed in front of their eyes during a vision. But the card was so small it was no wonder!

The miracle of the visionaries kneeling down all at once when the lady appears to them is a myth. Video clips show them kneeling at different speeds. This is very serious as they allegedly kneel the second the Virgin appears to them. The differences imply they are only pretending that she has come.

The visionaries say they have no connection with the outside world when they have their vision. But in 1984 a French cameraman pretended to be about to stab Vicka Ivankovic in the eyes with his fingers. She jumped and jerked her head away from him and later it was explained by her that she thought Mary was going to drop her baby Jesus and she was going to grab him! But then why did she jerk away from the Lady? This incident was recorded on tape and was once shown on a Channel 4 Dispatches documentary. If they were seeing anything they would know that Mary would not be so inept that she would drop the baby for she was full of God's power. Notice again that her and the other visionary are not looking in the same direction. Notice that she has a serene face not like somebody that was trying to catch the baby Jesus. The hands are still tightly clasped. Yet the site showing this picture was written up by a psychiatrist who claimed she reacted not at the man but at something else that nobody else could see! This shows that the pro-Medjugorje researchers are not to be trusted.

Fr Vlasic is in the picture too looking on and shows no reaction. He was according to many one big role-player in the Medjugorje fraud. He doesn't react at the assault on Vicka because he knows something like it had to happen sometime so he was prepared. And the reason he was so determined to act so calmly was so that he might not upset the visionaries who had to look serene and detached from their surroundings.



What about the research of Dr Giorgio Gagliardi who was involved in the 1985 medical testing of the visionaries as they claimed to have a vision? A world leader in research in Medical and Experimental Hypnosis he sees nothing supernatural in the visions or anything to do with them. He was interviewed on the Network 5 video, Divine or Deceived? The promoters just want to mention experts who seem to back up their views and what they want to be true. The same video contains testimony that Fr Slavko Barbaric one of the main advisors and recorder of Mary's messages told people to leave the sacristy one time for their presence prevented the apparition from appearing! An apparition that is controlled by men is definitely a false one. The false visionary Ivan was proven by footage to have lied about having bad English though his wife was English-speaking. The document he filled out under oath that the sign predicted by the Virgin was stated by her to be due to happen in June 1982 was displayed in the video. Everybody mentioned in

the video was given right of reply. Enough said! Fr Barbaric also approved of the phoney revelations of Teresa Lopez according to the shocking book, *The Medjugorje Deception*. It is a concern when the visionaries need such dubious people for guidance.

*The Scientific Tests on the Medjugorje Seers: A Critical Study* By Prof. Théophile Kammerer, President of the Lourdes International Medical Committee (1986)

In 1986, the President of the International Medical Committee of Lourdes, prof. Théophile Kammerer, was asked by an Italian physician, Dr. Cherubino Trabucchi, to examine the scientific dossiers on the Medjugorje visionaries and to give his authoritative opinion.

As a result, Prof. Kammerer exposed to colleagues of the Committee, at its meeting on 20 September 1986, a critical report.

The professor highlighted the inconclusive nature of the reports, as recognized by Father Rene Laurentin, who has been the most famous defender of Medjugorje in the world:

Professor Kammerer prepared a critical report on these Italian works and on those of the French team (at issue in our book: Henri Joyeux and Rene Laurentin *Études médicales...*) and proposed to discuss it with the International Medical Committee of Lourdes, at its meeting of 20-21 September 1986, at Lourdes. [...] The findings of the President Kammerer remain cautious. The philosophical positions of the eminent psychiatrist are in the critical current in respect of apparitions and miracles.

[R. Laurentin, *Dernières nouvelles de Medjugorje*, No 7, O.E.I.L., Paris, December 1988, pp. 24-25]

The report at issue was published on the website of the Bishopric of Mostar (on 10 June 2011) [see also "Službeni vjesnik", 2/2011, pp. 240-241].

Here it is:

Report of the Meeting of Lourdes International Medical Committee

This year, as had been decided for a long time, the Committee meeting has been held in Lourdes, 20 and 21 September 1986 [...]

It was chaired again by Bishop Henri Donze, Bishop of Tarbes and Lourdes, and Professor Théophile Kammerer, in the presence of Bishop John Sahuquet, Coadjutor of the Bishop Msgr. Donze.

Present were Professors and Doctors Juan Gibert Queralto Espinos and Domingo Perez, from Spain; Erwin Theiss, from Germany; St. John Dowling, from England; and Bernard Colvin, from Scotland.

From France, also present were Professors and Doctors: Jean-Louis Armand-Laroche, Charles Boudet, Charles Chassagnon, Pierre Mouren, Louis Revol, Jean Rodier, Jean Rousseau, André Trifaud, Théodore Mangiapan, besides Dr. Kammerer. [...]

After a few words of welcome from Bishop H. Donze for everyone, especially for the new members present, Prof. Kammerer made his presentation. [...]