

KNOCK APPARITION WAS SOMETHING NATURAL - IT WAS NOT A MIRACLE AND NOT PARANORMAL

KNOCK AND THE CHURCH

The Catholic has a duty to believe in the teaching Jesus Christ gave to the Church in the scriptures and the teaching he gives through the Church.

A duty is something you are obligated to do simply because it is right - you will be punished if you don't do it. To do it out of the fear of punishment means you are not committed to duty. It is only avoiding punishment you care about. A duty stands whether you agree with it or not. It is a form of compulsion.

It is Catholic teaching that the teachings we are bound to believe in order to have a real Catholic faith ceased with the death of the last apostle and that novelties are contrary to that faith. This is called public revelation. The Church says it is possible that God may however send private revelations.

"The Church occasionally approves of private revelations to this extent, that she declares that the alleged revelation contains nothing contrary to Christian faith or morals, and that it can be accepted on human faith without danger of superstition. But the Church never commands the faithful to assent to such revelations on the authority of God" (page 7, Faith - What We Must Believe, What is Christianity? by the Very Rev William Moran DD, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, Catholic Truth Society of Ireland, Lower Abbey Street, Dublin).

The apparition at Knock would be considered to be private revelation.

WHICH OF THE 1879 TESTIMONIES AT FACE VALUE SEEMS TO EXCLUDE A POSSIBLE NATURAL EXPLANATION

1, Patrick Hill because he says the vision was very detailed and the light was very bright and big and that he saw the figures move.

The problem with the miracle light is that he described it as a moving bright and white light. God would have no reason to move the light but man would! It is like a projector was being focused. If there was nobody there to focus it, then the wind may have been causing the movement. The whiteness of the light contradicts Patrick Walsh who spoke of a light like a fire and contradicts Dominick Beirne Sen who said the light was like the sun. Only the detail he mentioned indicates that the vision may have been supernatural but it can be accounted for by images of faces and a book being fastened to the gable to make detail. We are left with nothing to indicate a miracle. Its odd that few of the other seers focused on the detail. They should have been fascinated by it.

He didn't say what he meant by move. It is unlikely he saw the images blinking or breathing for he would have said that.

2, Mary McLoughlin

3, Mary Beirne

4, Patrick Walsh - Only if he really saw the light at the gable from a distance. If it was as bright as he said then it was not of earthly origin. "I never saw, I thought, so brilliant a light before". He said he only thought it. He was not sure. Maybe he just saw somebody's bonfire. You might think nobody would burn a fire on such a wet night. Does rain stop Guy Fawkes bonfires?

5, Patrick Beirne

6, Maggie Beirne,

7, Dominick Beirne - the detail may indicate the supernatural or that images were fastened to the wall.

8, Mrs Flatley

9, Bridget Trench - solid looking images that were impossible to touch and the rain blown against the gable which stayed dry.

10, Catherine Murray

11, John Curry

12, Judith Campbell

13, Margaret Beirne 2

14, Dominick Beirne Sen

15, John Durkan

Only Trench and Hill definitely indicate the supernatural at face value. Two others just may indicate it.

The evidence for a miracle or even something that cannot be naturally explained is weak. Everything else is compatible with the magic lantern hypothesis. Human nature being what it is, there has to be some lies and mistakes in some of the testimonies. This deepens the problem. Is it the miracle bits that are the mistakes? We have to assume that they are. This is not unfair as they are so few. Also the Hill and Trench cannot be taken at face value. The evidence for a miracle is appalling.

Annie was murdered. Three witnesses are cross-examined by the police. A deposition is produced for each of them. One deposition says a man was seen fleeing the scene in a car but the witness would not recognise the man again. Another says the man rushed past him with the weapon. The third says the man was there with a weapon but never touched the victim but a ghost appeared and did it. You give preference to the depositions that contain nothing supernatural. Even if the entity is put down as an alien - a natural entity - you still ignore the deposition because the alien is so unlikely though possible. You pay no attention to that evidence.

Religion is being completely irrational in saying, "Yes miracles are improbable. But if the evidence is good enough for them then we can believe they happened. Improbable things do happen." The point is that it is rational practice to pay no attention to evidence relating to a miracle being authentic if there is evidence that the event is not a true miracle. The stronger the case for an event's non-supernaturality, the less right you have to assume or believe that its supernatural even if there is evidence for it being miraculous or paranormal.

The main reason Catholics accept the Knock vision is that they think the witnesses did not seek the vision. But that would only apply to Mary Beirne and Mrs Flatley and Mary McLoughlin who seem to have been surprised by it. The others did seek it. Perhaps the argument that the vision is real for it was not sought is invalid because more people did seek it than didn't.

THE BEST TESTIMONY THAT SHOWS THAT SOMETHING NATURAL HAD HAPPENED

Patrick Beirne made the following declaration before a priestly board of investigators of the apparition in 1932.

"I saw three figures on the gable surrounded by wonderful light. They appeared to be something like shadows or reflections cast on a wall on a moon-lit night. I approached nearer the gable and passed my hand along the wall to find there was no material substance there. The figures were towards the left hand side of the gable. The figures were those of the Blessed Virgin in the central position; to the right of the Blessed Virgin was St Joseph, and to the left was a figure suggested by a bystander to represent St John the Evangelist. To the right of the group, and at a higher level was a figure of a lamb in a reclining position and facing the figures. I spent between twenty minutes and a half an hour there when I returned home."

This is actually of extreme importance. He confesses the images were dull enough. He says the light was wonderful but he seems to mean by this that it was like the light of the moon and was wonderful in the sense that it was a dark night with the moon invisible and yet the light was there. He touches the wall and finds there is nothing there but the stones. He suggests the lamb was not standing but was reclining. This contradicts the testimony of some of the others.

As he was related to the main witness, Mary Beirne, and he was her neighbour all his life he would not have said this unless it were true. And you don't contradict the witnesses who are the blue eyed boys and girls. His report was different from the clear vision she reported. She said the vision was out from the wall though she exhibited some confusion about that matter. He says it was on it. In 1936, she stated that the vision looked like a painting when close enough, "When we went near the wall, the figures seemed to go back to the wall, as if painted on it. Then when we came back from the wall, they seemed to stand out and come forward".

Whatever Patrick Beirne testified to in 1879, the Church refused to record it and used the following bluff: "Young Beirne

then told what he saw regarding the Vision, just as it has been described already by several persons who were present. The young fellow showed by his hands and position how the image or apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary and that of St. Joseph and St. John stood. " This trick would have been used had Beirne been saying something damning.

He made the following statement under oath on January 27 1936. "I, Patrick Beirne, of Knock in the County of Mayo, aged seventy-one years and upwards make oath and say, I remember the evening of the 21st of August 1879. My attention was called by another man named Dominick Beirne to a vision consisting of three figures, the Blessed Virgin, St Joseph and St John. It was then about nine o' clock. I was informed when I came on the scene that the vision was there since about a quarter to eight o' clock. The figure of the Blessed Virgin was in the centre; St Joseph was on the right; he was turned sideways and facing the Blessed Virgin. St John was on the Blessed Virgin's left. He had a book in his hand. The Blessed Virgin had a very brilliant crown on her head. She wore a brilliant white cloak. To the left of St John was a lamb lying on this side on the altar. The whole gable was lit up with a brilliant light. There was a heavy drizzle of rain. The rain did not appear to fall on the figures or the light. There were about fourteen or fifteen people there watching the vision with me; amongst them was Mrs Mary O Connell who is still living in Knock; she was then Mary Beirne. I remained there about an hour and then I went home."

In this one he exaggerates the brightness of the light. He does not say if the images were on the gable or at the gable. The priests obviously did not want him to testify that they were on it so they avoided asking him if they were on the gable or not. His claiming to have stayed for an hour is an outright lie. He says the rain was more drizzle than proper rain. That refutes the popular belief that the rain was torrential that night. The belief was started by the forged testimony of Bridget Trench. He only says it did not look as if it fell on the images or the light. Notice that it might still have done so. He is careful not to say, "The rain did not fall on the figures or the light." That would be too definite. Nothing he says indicates a true miracle or vision.

CONCLUSION

The evidence for a miracle at Knock is weak. It has been tampered with. And the tampered evidence itself is full of inconsistencies or indications of natural causes.