

SCIENCE AND MEDJUGORJE - DOES IT SHOW ANYTHING INEXPLICABLE IS GOING ON?

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[Frigerio](#)

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There is no Scientific Basis for the Supernaturality of the Medjugorje Apparition

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.

Despite the official statements from the Catholic hierarchy that has studied the alleged apparitions of Our Lady in Medjugorje in the former Yugoslavia that nothing NECESSARILY supernatural is happening at the site, many mavericks have tried to provide evidence to the contrary. The ringleader is the dangerous manipulator Fr Rene Laurentin humbly known as the world's foremost mariologist, that is theologian of Mary. There have been attempts to show that what is happening cannot be explained scientifically. One does not need to be a medical expert or a theologian or a science to notice that the science involved is full of chicanery and lies and speculation. And experts and scientists can be found who laugh at their conclusions. The experts did not do a lot of tests and it is the ones that might suggest something supernatural is happening that they discuss. Even these are extremely inconclusive.

As to their level, these tests remain superficial [...] Despite this, all the sophisticated techniques impress the simple-minded readers.

T. Kammerer, Critical Study of Medical Explorations of the Medjugorje Seers (LIMC, 20 September 1986).

The Laurentin and Joyeux book

The book we will be sifting through is called Scientific and Medical Studies on the Apparitions at Medjugorje. It 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. It is the best book then for searching for evidence against the apparitions being miraculous. The book goes as far as to make out Medjugorje is supernaturally full of radiation! If that were true the place would be swamped with physicists. And this huge big thing is only mentioned in passing!

The six visionaries go into ecstasy. The ecstasy is the joyous trance that shows the vision is happening. The book says that "since the end of 1983, ecstasy begins before they have finished the first Our Father" (page 7). Yet the book says that when the youths look up when the Virgin manifests there is no evidence of signalling to account for them all doing it at the one time! They say the prayer together and they could have agreed to throw their heads back at a certain word and to change that word every day to make it look genuine. In Channel 4's program from 1998, The Miracle Police two visionaries have a slight difference as to when they raise their heads and eyes as the Virgin allegedly departs upwards. Hold your finger on pause to put it in very slow motion if you have a tape of it and look carefully.

Page 10 says that the apparition lasts no more than one or two minutes since the end of 1983 though previously she would have stayed for three quarters of an hour. This suggests that when medical and scientific tests began the visions may have been shortened by the visionaries to make life and non-detection of their deception easier.

On page 11 we read how Vicka managed to shorten the first medical examination they had in 1981. This examination was required by the police. Vicka kept nagging Dr Bijevic about when it was going to be over and it was not even her turn and she refused to sit down and she said cheekily that she would stand for she was healthy and she would come back for an examination if she needed one and the doctor let her go. Anyone who really saw the Virgin would want it to be verified and when she was afraid of being examined it suggests she thought she had something to hide. Could it have been something like evidence of psychosis?

Page 16 says that when the Virgin saw one of the visionaries in a harness for testing his physical reactions to the apparition

she said that was not necessary when asked for her opinion. The doctor, Botta, found this offensive thinking that the Lady was accusing him of doing wrong in testing. Dr Botta was then told that the Virgin only meant that prayer was needed and that the tests were just accessories and was not accusing him. But this answer just tells him he was accused! If the Virgin was the real Mary or the Devil they would welcome tests. Prayer is not the essential. Prayer will not tell you what is true or false with regard to an apparition's authenticity. And if prayer worked human nature would manage to get in the way. We have to investigate not just pray.

Fr Bulat stuck a needle in Vicka when she was having a vision. "Under the sheer pressure of the action Vicka's body moved somewhat to the right but she quickly and gracefully regained her balance. Not a muscle in her face moved" (page 18). You can avoid seeming to have felt pain when you are expecting the needle and think of the bad consequences if you show any evidence of being hurt which will help you bear it. The children would have known that visionaries were tested during ecstasy with needles and have been prepared for it. The thought of what they would lose if they reacted was enough to make them blank out the pain. A reaction can be hidden or disguised. Actors do that all the time. But we must be clear that there was a possible reaction though not a facial one. The Franciscan fraudsters would have the children well prepared about what tests visionaries can expect.

Referring to another test, "When we questioned Fr Bulat he said that he had noticed some muscular movement in the neck, at least during the course of the second prod. But he was placed behind Vicka and too much on the vertical to be able to notice. It would appear that any movement was simply Vicka's effort to regain her balance after the pressure of the needle" (page 18).

At least the quote admits to being unsure if it was a reaction or not.

A neck movement can be seen from behind if he is near her which he was. He had to have been able to see when he said he saw it. Why prod if the face cannot be at least partly seen?

So Fr Bulat was accused of lying when he said he saw the neck and it is not true that the movement appeared to be just an attempt to steady for it could just have easily have been a reaction to pain. Why would the muscles of the neck need to move if the body moved to the right meaning that the muscles round the waist were responsible? The waist would have been used to balance.

And where is the proof that autosuggestion was not employed to help her take the pain.

Did Vicka know she was going to be needled? It does not matter. If she did know it would happen but not when she had to be ready. And it is hard to believe she was not forewarned as Bulat could have been in breach of the law of the land if he just put a needle in without any warning.

This episode makes us wary of this book for it shows that the authors were willing to ignore the case against the apparition to focus on the reasons for it being real. And that is not an honest approach.

Henri Joyeux was going to test the children with EEGs to determine if what was happening in their minds was normal when they were having their vision. Jacov, Ivanka and Marija refused for the Virgin had said there was no need. It looks like they were stalling.

They were urged to ask the Virgin who said, "You did well to ask. You can go ahead" (page 19). But it was not right for them to ask her permission. Visions have to be tested before they can be trusted. Mary would take that for granted anyway and would not be concerned about permission for it was not her who was being tested but the visionaries. She would have told them to look for tests from the start if she had really been from Heaven or Hell. The tests showed that the vision was not a hallucination. But we now know determining a hallucination is more complex than was thought at the time of the tests. Paranormal experts believe that paranormal forces can cause hallucinations but medical experts prefer to keep it strictly scientific.

Mary not wanting the visions tested in a world filled with fake religions and fake claims does far more to show this apparition is not from God than any test.

On page 22, we read that Joyeux and Laurentin would not have discussed testing with the children anymore if they had been against it seemingly since the Virgin had told the children to make up their own minds about being tested. This is disgusting and shows that the authors were amenable to blind faith and did not come to their work with a good and neutral scientific attitude.

Page 23 tells us that there is no reaction to seeing bright light like blinking or turning away from it when the vision is

happening. Only the pupils reacted. But you can train your facial muscles to hide any reaction to such light. It is easy enough to train for that by looking close at lightbulbs. And if the children really see the Virgin in a glowing aura their pupils should stay the same for it is the same strength of light they are looking at. Remember they see her they say as a normal person in every other respect.

On page 25, we learn that the visionaries claimed that they could touch the apparition. Jacov alone was to touch her while he was being tested to see if he was really touching anything. He did not and then said that he had forgotten to ask her permission and that she had left as he was about to ask her. But the real Virgin would not have done that for she would have known he had something to say to her. And how could something like that be forgotten until the end of the vision? You don't go to an interview and forget to go into the office and talk about yourself.

Ivanka and Marija asked the Virgin if they could have the test done and she said no (page 25). Obviously, when the Virgin was so unreasonable there was no Virgin at all. The real Virgin Mary does not make mistakes. The visionaries were making up an excuse.

Page 25, "At the beginning of the ecstasy eye movements ceased almost simultaneously".

So the eyeballs were not moving? No need for a miracle for that. The visionaries knew that the eyes should look at the one spot during ecstasy when the cause supposedly manifests. The word almost is of the utmost importance. The book is for defending the view that the ecstasy is supernatural. If it were they would all fall into it in the exact same fraction of a second. Almost is too open to interpretation. Why are we not told exactly what time it took?

Before the ecstasy of the 29th of December 1984, Ivan jumped at a noise of 70 decibels. During the ecstasy, he did not react to a noise of 90 decibels. This was as loud as the noise of a combustion engine. He did not react for he was prepared for the noise and when he jumped the first time he did so because he knew that the test was to see if the noise would startle him during the apparition. He said he heard nothing (page 26). Yet the book says that during the apparition the visionaries can still be partially stimulated by the world – they are not completely cut off from their surroundings.

If Ivan was in a relaxed state he may have been hard to startle. People who can be jumpy may be hard to startle when they are doing meditation or something very relaxing.

The most important thing now is that Ivan lied about the noise. The test was scientifically invalid for it cannot show that he really did not hear anything.

It was concluded, "With regard to the hearing function, our tests showed that the auditory nerve continued to transmit sounds but that these sounds did not reach the cortex" (page 27). But it is only Ivan's word we have that he did not hear the sound. Why would the nerve carry sound if not to the cortex? What is the point of noise registering in the nerve and not the cortex?

The tests revealed that when Ivanka's voice became quiet during the apparition "there was no longer any movement of the larynx" (page 26). So when she spoke to the Lady only her lips moved. There is no miracle in this though many say there is! That is because they are believing her when she says she speaks aloud to the Lady.

Speaking inaudibly is motivated by a desire to prevent mistakes. If they spoke aloud then Ivanka could have said, "Yes, we want you here tomorrow," and Jacov, "I know you have helped him", both at the same time proving that they were not really answering anybody at all. An inaudible voice would not testify against the authenticity of the apparitions if there was only one witness but only if there were more and with Medjugorje the apparitions are short and the messages banal so the Lady has nothing to hide. It makes no sense that a supernatural being would not make it look more like she or he is appearing which involves letting them talk out loud.

You can gently move air through your voice-box that makes it show up on the instruments as if you are talking loud but something supernatural is preventing others from hearing you.

But the silence may be totally fictitious for Ivan was filmed having a vision in England and his voice was audible when he spoke to the Virgin but low in the video, Visions on Demand. The scientists promoting the apparitions are lying when they say he is miraculously inaudible.

Page 27: "The visionaries do not feel pinching, prodding or other interventions. This disconnection is not total; rather it is partial and variable". We even read: "It all happens as if the visionaries, urged on by the ecstasy (their encounter with the Virgin) gradually adapted themselves to it and eventually allowed themselves to be lost in it". This ecstasy cannot be much of a miracle in that case.

Page 27 ends with the extraordinary statement that the visionaries “warn the people when they appear to annoy the Virgin or walk on her veil”. The Virgin must act upset which shows that she is not a miraculous being. She could miraculously enable the people to walk through her. If the visionaries did not believe the Lady could look after herself it is strange when she was able to keep herself invisible from the people. They are certainly lying about the Lady and trying to make her seem too human because they don’t know that Bernadette of Lourdes, for example, saw a Lady she could not disturb or describe exactly. The vision is not as mysterious and magical. The visionaries did know what was happening around them.

At that stage the visionaries should know that people cannot disturb the apparition. It looks like a stupid piece of drama. Lies unravel.

I find it disturbing that Ivan and Vicka are able to look at "Mary" without blinking while the rest do (31). Bernadette did not blink at Lourdes it is said. The differences suggest that there is no miraculous synchronicity. What use is partial?

Page 35, “The visionaries’ gaze converges on the same well-located spot. We have not been able to secure the evidence that would pin-point the spot geometrically.”

The exact same spot. There is something very suspect here. One would stare at the left eye and another at the right eye if there were a woman before them. Why don’t they gaze at the hands or mouth? They are just looking at a spot on the wall that they had agreed upon. There is a cross on the wall and there are other items that they could agree to look at. The quote assumes they looked at precisely the same pinpoint. Quite an assumption! There is a big difference between getting the right spot or the right pinpoint.

When the book says they look at the same spot and then that it could not verify where this spot would be on the wall it shows it is not being scientific for how do the authors know they are looking at the same spot? It is easy for people to look the one direction but harder for them to look at the exact same spot. The spot should have been pinpointed and then the Lady asked to move to see if they could still look at the same spot on an unblemished wall.

The Lady starts the Our Father as she goes and then they all say aloud, “Who art in Heaven”, at the same time and recite the rest. There are techniques for measuring time in your own mind to manage this. It is impossible that they will all say it at the exact same time so signalling is still possible. It is hard to be sure if they all said it at the one time. You can only look at one face at a time. They say it slowly and with concentration and with her gone they can’t start at exactly the same time. When one voices the first syllable the rest start.

They raise their eyes and heads as the Virgin ascends (page 36). The first person to move could be signalling the other to follow suit by doing so. When they will raise their heads at different rates one person starting it off would not be noticed. There were no screens placed between the visionaries. In conjuring and mind-reading tricks similar and better feats are easily accomplished.

The children said they see the Lady as a real person and not as a vision (page 16). A test was done to see if a card in front of their eyes affected their seeing the apparition. Page 72: “The screening test does not impair the vision, therefore the normal visual pathways are not used.” The screening test was putting a card in front of the eyes of the witnesses during the apparition so that they could be asked later if it interfered with their seeing her. They said it did not. If so, then what are they looking at with their eyes? Why would God want it to look as if they were seeing with their normal eyes? There is some lie here. If God lets them act as if they can see through their normal eyes when they can see through cards then he is not reliable and he can’t be doing an unnecessary miracle just so that it will be verified when the Virgin gave the thumbs down for the touch test.

As a test to pick up what Vicka was saying in her voice that the human ear could not pick up (page 76) the apparition came and went before the apparatus had time to give a good interpretation. Vicka did not want it to be found that she was not talking at all but just moving her lips. Even more telling is that the Virgin was to deliver a message and she did not but said that the apparatus was not needed and then she left. The expected message was not given until the day after. If all this is not suspicious then what is? The Virgin would not cancel what she had promised to avoid a test that would do her or nobody else any harm.

And a stapedium for testing the inner ear conveniently fell out of Ivan’s ear when he knelt at the start of his vision. It would have been inserted better than that so it must have been deliberate. Some oil in the ear would make it fall out easier. Why was it not put in again? The testers must have wanted it to come out. Ivan might have hoped this would happen and that was why he knelt so fast to try and budge it.

The ecstasy is characterised by alpha brain waves. Alpha is associated with relaxation and expectation. When you are paying attention you are in beta (page 73). New Age religion promotes methods of putting yourself in alpha. Silva Mind Control is chiefly concerned with using alpha as is Laurie Cabot’s Science of Witchcraft Tradition. It says that counting

backwards and relaxing put you in alpha. If the children were not paying attention to Mary they were not seeing her. They could not have been talking to her for when you think or use the intellect you snap out of alpha.

The conclusion of the experts is that the apparitions were “scientifically inexplicable” (page 74). That judgment was based on believing the visionaries. So it was not scientific for science is for facts and hard evidence and not faith or testimony. The only inexplicable thing might be the children doing things at the same time as if prompted by Mary. But that does not prove that they really see her or see anything. The authors are too anxious to verify the apparitions.

The bishop of the diocese is right to say that there is nothing supernatural at Medjugorje. The visionaries failed all the real tests. It is hard to know how much attention you can pay to tests like this. There are millions of companies around the world which disagree on how to make the best sunscreen and if you want to find what is the best UVA protection you will have trouble finding out. Nancy Fowler the visionary from Conyers, Georgia, was tested and supposedly found to have the brain activity that is associated with a coma though she was wide awake (An Overview of the Medical and Scientific Testing of Visionary Nancy Fowler, Conyers, Georgia WWW). But what we are not told is that once Jesus blessed a well in her visions so that pilgrims could use the water as a sacramental and it turned out that the water contained dangerous bacteria. Fowler makes apocalyptic prophecies with no dates or times specified for when they will be fulfilled and predicts the USA engaging in war with oriental people who invade America. The lack of precision and detail in the prophecies indicate that, at the very least, she is lying about what she is being told if she is being told anything at all. God would not send his servant to appear to somebody that was too unreliable. To predict war like she does is to encourage nations to war for they think then that God ordains it. The point is, false visionaries allegedly show up strange things during tests so we should still be wary of Medjugorje. The tests are futile from a religious point of view.

Futile!