

## THOUGHTS ON THE CLAIMED VISION OF JESUS' MOTHER TO TWO CHILDREN AT LA SALETTE

La Salette is a mountain near Grenoble in France. There on September 19th, 1846, the Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ who is God in Catholic dogma, allegedly appeared to Melanie Mathieu and Maximin Giraud when they were tending cows. This apparition was given the approval of the Church in 1851 (page 111, The Thunder of Justice).

The following information is taken from Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture.

The Bishop, Philbert de Bruillard, set up two commissions to investigate the apparition. The first one consisted of the cathedral canons. The second one was of the Seminary Professors. They were content with the testimony of the children but "there are certain things which arouse some caution about the truth of Our Lady's words" (page 217). This can be taken as showing the commissions were undecided. The authenticity of the vision then was inconclusive. Though the bishop has to decide if the apparition is authentic or not and that is his right, the right does not apply if the bishop refuses to listen to his commission. He set up the commission to check it out and if he goes against its recommendation then his approval for the apparition lacks true authority.

Four years after the apparition he declared that the apparition can be believed in without question and that "it bears all the marks of truth." Doubtlessly that was going too far. Even official Catholic teaching asserts that such apparitions may be convincing but still false.

Donal Anthony Foley

Donal Anthony Foley complained in his book Marian Apparitions, The Bible and the Modern World (page 144) that after the apparition was accepted as approved and believable by Bishop Philbert de Bruillard and despite the implicit approval of the Pope, the hostility to the authenticity of the apparition was still strong in certain parts. Now Foley knows that the Pope's opinion carries no significance for the Pope never gave any official approval. He only approved as a Catholic man and not as pope.

The Bishop had to discipline Abbe Deleon - a debunker - for having a girlfriend. It is said by Foley that the Abbe sought revenge by trying to refute the apparition. In 1852, the priest's book La Salette - A Valley of Lies appeared. Foley and nobody else gives any real evidence that the priest's motive was spite. So was he sincere after all? His claims casting doubt on the apparition were dismissed as lies.

Another diocesan priest Abbe Cartellier wrote a book to support Deleon's view that the vision was a hoax. In 1865, Cartellier was putting a new book together to refute the vision. But he didn't complete it and recanted and then claimed to believe. Deleon wrote another book debunking the apparition after that time.

Some have complained that the apparition never mentions social sins such as hurting others. The Virgin only criticised breaking the Sabbath and blasphemy. The Church replies that these sins lead to social sins. That is nonsense. There are people who miss Mass on Sunday and who blaspheme and who are outstanding neighbours.

The story is too messy and the vision is best seen as hearsay.

