

MARY'S APPEARANCES & THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

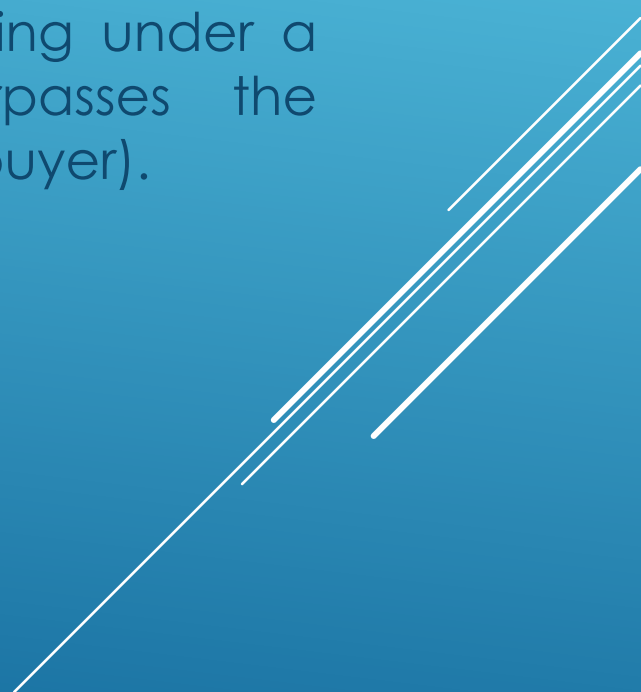
Fr David Parmiter

- **What does this definition mean?**

- That the mode of perception in an apparition is of the sensory order;
- Whereas the reality that makes an appearance either is not sensible in itself (God, Angels, non-resurrected dead) or is not sensible under the ordinary conditions of our present mode of knowledge (the glorified bodies of Christ and Mary)

WHAT IS AN APPARITION?


A manifestation of God, Angels or the dead (Saints or not) appearing under a form that surpasses the senses. (Louis Bouyer).

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THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: LUMEN GENTIUM (CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH)

- ▶ The appearances of Mary testify to her active presence in the life of the Church.
- ▶ They are a special manifestation of the maternal charity spoken of by the Second Vatican Council.
- ▶ Their purpose is to recall and focus attention on an aspect of Gospel teaching.

“By her maternal charity, she cares for the brethren of her Son, who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties, until they are led into their blessed home.”

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- ▶ **Some general considerations around authenticity...**
- ▶ if the message of an apparition is at variance with a revealed doctrine or the teaching of the Church, then this is a sign of non-authenticity, or conscious or unconscious falsification.
- ▶ the extraordinary or miraculous aspect of an apparition has its importance, but it ought not to become the principal object of attention.
- ▶ instead, we should focus on the aspects of the Gospel message pointed out by Mary (conversion, prayer, penance etc..) for our life, the needs of the Church and the world.

AUTHENTICITY

Ecclesial approval is not infallible in the matter of apparition and therefore do not command the inner assent of faith.

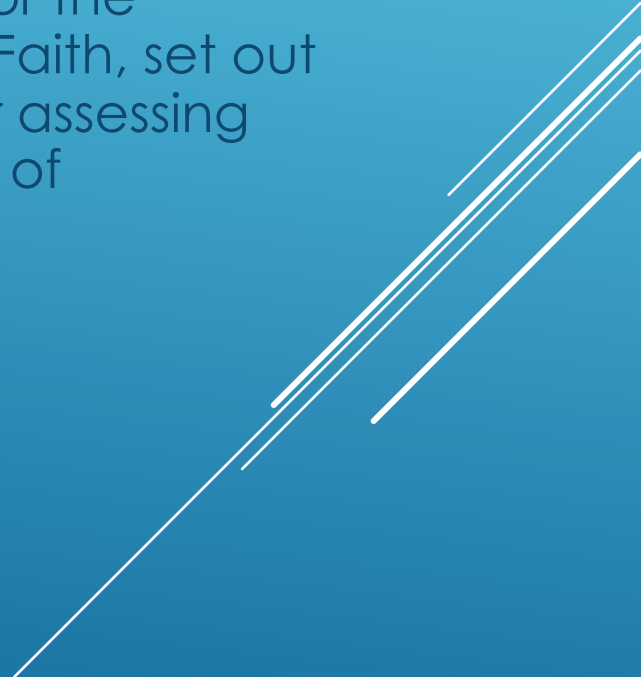
Nevertheless, if Ecclesial authority says no (interdicts), that is binding on the faithful.

► **The 1977 principles...**

- is this event in harmony with or contrary to Revelation, faith or morals?
- are the seers sincere persons or hypocrites, healthy or sick, saints or sinners?
- are there signs, such as healings, that are scientifically recognised?
- are there spiritual fruits or not?

AUTHENTICITY CONTINUED...

In 1977, Cardinal Seper, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, set out some criteria for assessing the authenticity of apparitions.

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► **International recognition...**

- Guadalupe (1531); Lourdes (1858); Knock (1879); Fatima (1917)

► **Recognition by the local Bishop...**

- Laus (1664-1718); Miraculous Medal (1830); La Salette (1846); Pontmain (1871); Beauraing (1932-1933); Banneux (1933); Nicaragua (1981); Rwanda (1988); Japan (1984); etc...

WHICH APPARITIONS HAVE BEEN RECOGNISED BY THE CHURCH?

By the Church as a whole,
there are four which have
been recognised.

By the local Bishop or the
national Bishop's
Conference, many more, I
know of eleven, not
including the above.

- ▶ **Rene Laurentin, an international authority on the apparitions of Mary...**
- ▶ “Thus, the convergent message of recent apparitions is the sin of the world, the evangelical remedy, and Mary’s maternal exhortation for peace and reconciliation of human beings through the only way possible, which is the loving acceptance of God in the prayer of the heart.”

MEANING OF THE MESSAGES

Turning away from sin;

A warning against moral degradation – a danger to children;

Take up faith, conversion and fasting – the evangelical remedy.

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MAJOR APPARITIONS: EVENT, MESSAGE AND CONTEXT

Guadalupe, Lourdes, Knock and Fatima



OUR LADY OR LOURDES

Lourdes in 1858: a city of about 5,000 people, located along the river Pau, at the entrance to the high valleys of the Pyrenees.

Our lady appears to St. Bernadette 18 times between 11 February and 16 July 1858, in the Grotto of Massabielle.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES

► **Personal message for St. Bernadette...**

“Do me the favour of coming here for 15 days; I do not promise to make you happy in this life but in the next.”

► **Penitential message...**

“Pray to God for sinners. Penitence, Penitence, Penitence...”

► **Ecclesial Message...**

“Tell the priests that people should come here in procession and that a chapel should be built on the site.”

“I am the immaculate Conception”

“Tell the people to come and wash in the water”

MESSAGES

Personal for St. Bernadette

Penitential message

Ecclesial message

► **Fruits...**

Conversion, healing, pilgrimage, young people;

► **Impact on our Diocese**

Yearly pilgrimage

► **Impact on our national Church**

HCPT yearly pilgrimage

► **Context**

1859: publication of The origin of the species

A MAJOR SHRINE

Fruits

Impact on our Diocese

Impact on our national Church

Context

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LOURDES : 5 MILLION PILGRIMS



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, MEXICO

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego, an Indian native and recent Christian convert, in 1531. The local Bishop did not believe him and Our Lady left an imprint of her image on his cloak as proof to the disbelieving prelate!

► **Divine Motherhood**

Juan Diego was to proclaim who she was “the Mother of the true God who gives life” and to ask for the “construction of a shrine where she could show her motherly love.”

► **Shrine of the Mexican people**

“The fact that the apparition occurred at the beginning of a new people’s history is a clue to what it was to mean for the Mexican nation. The Virgin has figured in all the stages of their national history.

► **Context**

The birth of a new Christian nation.
Reformation and secularisation.

MESSAGE

Divine Motherhood

Shrine of the Mexican
people

Context



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE



OUR LADY OF FATIMA

OUR LADY OF FATIMA, PORTUGAL

Our Lady appeared to three children in the summer of 1917. The children were Lucia Dos Santos and her two younger cousins, Francisco and Jacinta. They tended the sheep and often prayed the Rosary in the fields. Context WW1 & Russian revolution

► Apparitions

The Lady asked the children to pray for the conversion of sinners and an end to the war, and to come back every month, on the 13th.

► Our Lady of the Rosary

On the 13th October, the 'Lady' identified herself as "Our Lady of the Rosary" and again called for prayer and penance.

► Celestial phenomenon

On the 13th October the sun seemed to tumble from the sky, witnessed by a large crowd.

► Secrets

All secrets now revealed.

MESSAGE

Apparitions on 13th May, June, July, 19th August and 13th September and October.

Our Lady of the Rosary

Celestial phenomenon

Secrets

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OUR LADY OF FATIMA



OUR LADY OF KNOCK, IRELAND

OUR LADY OF KNOCK, IRELAND

On 21st August 1879, fifteen witnesses saw a vision on the south gable of the wall of the village church. It was a vision of Our Lady, Saint Joseph, St John the Evangelist, an altar on which stood a cross and a lamb. No words were spoken

► Exploring the message (Michael O'Carroll)

“Everything points to the Mass. Also the necessity of Mary's mediation and intercession.”

“Let us see, then, in the manifestation of Knock, an invitation to have recourse ever more to the Blessed Virgin, Mediatrix of All Graces and Queen of Heaven and Earth, to pray to her and to take into our lives the consciousness of her full gentle presence in heaven.

► Context

A time of conflict and poverty in Ireland.

‘MESSAGE’

Our Lady – personal holiness

St John – the Church

St Joseph – charity

The altar, cross and the
lamb – the Mass



OUR LADY OF KNOCK, IRELAND



OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM, SLIPPER CHAPEL, ENGLAND



OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM, ENGLAND



OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE, FRANCE



OUR LADY OF LA SALETTE, FRANCE



OUR LADY OF MEDJUGORJE



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