

# Knock Marian Apparition of Thursday 21st August 1879

## *A Brief Account of the Apparition and A Suggested Interpretation*



### **IMPORTANT NOTE:-**

**The Catholic Church refrains from interpreting apparitions.** Members of the Church are, however, at liberty either to believe or not to believe that any particular apparition actually took place unless it has actually been condemned by the Church.

There is no "official" interpretation of the Knock Marian Apparition. The widely held opinions as to the identity of the Persons in the apparition are *presumptions made by some of the original witnesses*. Information about the demeanour of those Persons also comes from some of the original witnesses.

The "presumption" that Our Lady appeared "Expecting Jesus" is of more recent origin (2012). The basis for this presumption is explained in this document.

If this new interpretation is correct then the Knock Apparition is possibly the greatest Marian Apparition ever.

# Interpretation of Knock Marian Apparition

## Introduction

This interpretation of the Knock Apparition is not the usual interpretation. At the time of finalising this Appendix (18<sup>th</sup> April 2012) I have not heard or read about the interpretation which I am going to give here. However, this new interpretation does derive from consideration of information which is already widely known and contained in books such as **The Apparition at Knock** by Monsignor Michael Walsh (2008).

## Details of the Apparition

It would not be feasible for me to relate here all of the details of the Knock Apparition. In this Appendix I am concerned only with the interpretation of the Vision. I would recommend Mons. Walsh's 2008 book.

In the briefest terms -

- The Apparition took place at the rear of the church in the village of Knock, which is in County Mayo, Ireland.
- It took place on the evening of Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> August 1879.
- It lasted about two hours (about half in daylight and half at night).
- Light was radiating from the Vision.
- There were no specific visionaries; all who came saw the Vision.
- There were no spoken words, only the Vision itself.
- The Vision has usually been described as “a tableau”; Mons. Walsh describes it as consisting of two panels; both of these descriptions seem reasonable.
- (From an observer's perspective, from left to right)  
In the left of the tableau there were three persons;  
In the right of the tableau there was an Altar;  
On the Altar were a Lamb and a Cross;  
The Altar was surrounded by bright points of light (generally believed to represent Angels).
- (Again from an observer's perspective)  
The first person, a Man (believed to be St. Joseph) bowing in the direction of the second person;  
The second person, a Woman (believed to be Mary, Mother of Jesus) dressed regally.  
The third person, a Man (believed to be St. John the Evangelist) dressed as a Bishop who is holding a book up in the direction of the Altar scene (which was at a higher level and which was aligned on the centre of the rear of the church) and who appears to be emphasising some point about the Altar scene.  
The Altar Scene (as described above).

## The Interpretation

The interpretation which I am giving here seems to me to be extremely obvious and I cannot understand why somebody has not previously stated it. And it is easily stated - that Mary is represented in the Apparition as expecting Jesus, the Second Person in God. That's it.

But I need to make the case for this interpretation. And that's easy too.

- (a) St. Joseph, who is bowing towards Our Lady, is usually said to be "deferring to" Her. My interpretation says that St. Joseph is bowing in adoration of the Unborn Jesus in Her Womb. (*St. Joseph was declared Patron of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1870 - not long before this Apparition.*)
- (b) St. John the Evangelist, who is holding a book in his left hand and is elevating it somewhat towards the Altar Scene is said to be "making some point" (unspecified). My interpretation says that St. John is pointing out that the Apparition within the Apparition (the Altar Scene) symbolises the Unborn Jesus in Mary's Womb.
- (c) Mons. Walsh, in his 2008 book (Ch.8), quotes an interview given by one of the main witnesses to the Apparition, Mary Beirne (pronounced "burn"), which was published in 1880. During that interview she described how Mary was dressed as follows -

*"There was one large cloak pinned to the neck, and falling loose over the arms, and there was another garment inside; it was tighter to the figure, and there was something like a 'puffing' up the front of it."*

I hope that the reader will be satisfied that the Knock Marian Apparition primarily represents -

**"Our Lady Expecting the Child Jesus, the Second Person in God".**

If this interpretation is correct (and I assert that it is), then the Knock Marian Apparition is a celebration of the full Nine Months of Mary's Pregnancy from the Incarnation to the Birth of Jesus. It is a unique representation of all things that cause Mary to be Co-Mediator with Jesus of All Graces and Benefits from God. She is the Only Perfect Christian and the Sole Recipient of God's Graces. The physical Hearts of Jesus and Mary are linked.

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While this interpretation might give The Shrine at Knock a special significance as a place of pilgrimage for expectant mothers, its significance is much broader than that.

**Mary is the Mother of God and Our Mother**

**Jesus, Her Child, is The Sacrificial Lamb who came into this Universe  
to give Us the chance to choose our Shares in His Divinity and Eternal Happiness**

## Additional Considerations | Knock Marian Apparition

I also believe that we can answer the following three questions about the Knock Apparition -

- (i) Why in the village of Knock?
- (ii) Why in the year 1879?
- (iii) Why on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1879?

### Why in the village of Knock?

Because it was in the Diocese of Archbishop John McHale.

### Why in the year 1879?

Because 1879 is four years after an official act, in 1875, by John McHale.

### Why on 21<sup>st</sup> August 1879?

Because it coincides with a ceremony at La Salette which has parallels.

Major Apparitions tend to occur after some major developments in the Catholic Church. (I will demonstrate this at another time!) I believe that the Apparition at Knock is God's response to the Declaration of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility in 1870 by the (First) Vatican Council. The following is a quotation from Derek Holmes' book *The Triumph of the Holy See* -

*“... it is an indication of the triumph of Ultramontanism that none of the bishops who opposed the definition refused to accept it; the last two bishops to submit were Bishops McHale and Moriarty at the Synod of Maynooth in 1875.”*

Just as the Apparitions at Lourdes occurred four years after the Declaration of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, so too did the Apparition at Knock occur four years after the last official act in the Declaration of the Dogma of Papal Infallibility - its official acceptance by McHale and Moriarty.

And the Apparition occurred in McHale's diocese. It is known that the people of Knock were particularly faithful to their Catholic Faith and that the Parish Priest, Archdeacon Cavanagh, was a pious man. He has been declared Venerable.

On the same day as the Apparition at Knock, 21<sup>st</sup> August 1879, a major ceremony was held at the location of the 1846 Apparitions at La Salette, France. The following is a quotation from Mons. Walsh's 2008 book (Ch.8) -

*“... on the very day on which the apparition was seen at Knock, 21 August 1879, an impressive ceremony had taken place at La Salette, in which the statue of Our Lady was solemnly crowned by the Papal Legate, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, before a vast assembly of bishops, priests and Lay people.”*

In the Knock Apparition, Our Lady was wearing a Crown with a rose on it.

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The content of this leaflet is based on Appendix A of “The Single Most Important Truth” written by Eugene Shannon B.A.

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