



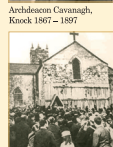
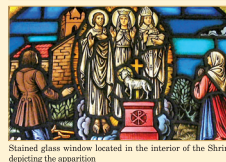
THE APPEALS
OF OUR LADY
APPARITIONS
AND
MARIAN SHRINES
IN THE WORLD

Apparition of the Virgin Mary at KNOCK

 IRELAND, 1879

On August 21, 1879, Mary McLoughlin, 45-year old housekeeper of the church administered by the Archdeacon Bartholomew Kavanagh, went to the nearby cottage of Mary Byrne at about 7 PM. Along the way, on the south side of the church she saw the figures of the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph and Saint John the Evangelist dressed as a Bishop, mistaking them for statues, and also an altar with a red cross and a lamb, traditional image of Jesus, with Angels in adoration. Mrs. McLoughlin thought that the Archdeacon had himself acquired those images in Dublin. After half an hour the two women returned to lock the main door, and saw there again the figures, and realized that it was instead an apparition. Then Mary called her brother Dominick, her mother and her sister, both named Margaret, and informed also the people of the surrounding area. Her cousin Dominick Sr., his son Patrick, their servant John Durkan and little six-year old Curry John rushed there. Meanwhile, Mary Byrne had run to the house of her friend Judith Campbell and the seventy-five-year old Bridget Trench, who later gave a detailed account of the apparition. On the evening August 21, fifteen people between the ages of five and seventy-five and of both genders, were thus witnesses of an apparition at the south side of the small parish church of the town, the church of Saint John the Baptist.

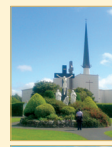
The Virgin Mary was described as being life-size, slightly elevated from the ground, dressed in white, with a rose on her bright crown. Patrick Hill reported of having seen her eyes, with iris and pupils. She was described as "immersed in prayer", with her eyes turned towards Heaven. Bridget Trench stated: "I went immediately to kiss the feet of the Blessed Virgin, but in my embrace I did not grasp anything but the wall, and was left amazed that it was not possible to touch the figures which I had seen and identified so clearly". Saint Joseph was described to be in white garments at the right of the Virgin, with his head inclined towards her, with grizzled hair and beard. Saint John the Evangelist was in prayer at the left of the Virgin, with a long robe and a Bishop's miter, slightly turned towards the others and with a large book resembling a Bible in his hands. Those present recited the Rosary under the unceasing rain, for more than two hours. The witnesses reported that the ground had remained completely dry during the event, despite the rain. After about two hours the apparition suddenly ceased, with the figures never having moved nor spoken. An ecclesiastical commission of inquiry was formed by the Archbishop of Tuam, John MacHale. In 1936 the apparition was recognized worthy of belief and devotion to it was authorized. In 1979, on the occasion of its centennial, Pope John Paul II went to visit the Shrine.



Original church where the apparition took place



For two hours the amazed visionaries prayed under the rain without getting the least wet, but also without receiving any word from the heavenly characters. The symbolic meaning of the vision was easily interpreted. At the center of the altar above the immaculate Lamb, as St. John saw it in the Book of Revelation on the golden altar of Heaven. Thus the Sacrifice of Calvary is remembered, made present every day on earth by the Holy Mass and in Heaven by the offering of Christ of His glorious wounds to the Father and of His obedience of love. St. John, the first son of Mary, appears as a priest, and pointing to the Virgin, evokes her role of Co-Redemptress carried out on Calvary: with her sufferings, with her soul pierced by the sword of sorrows



Interior of the Shrine of Knock. The modern Shrine has been built next to the original church, where the apparition of the Virgin took place



The Shrine of Knock, in Ireland. The church is a modern structure, intentionally symbolic: it rests on thirty-two pillars, one for each of the thirty-two counties making up Ireland



The statue of the Virgin, Our Lady Queen of Ireland