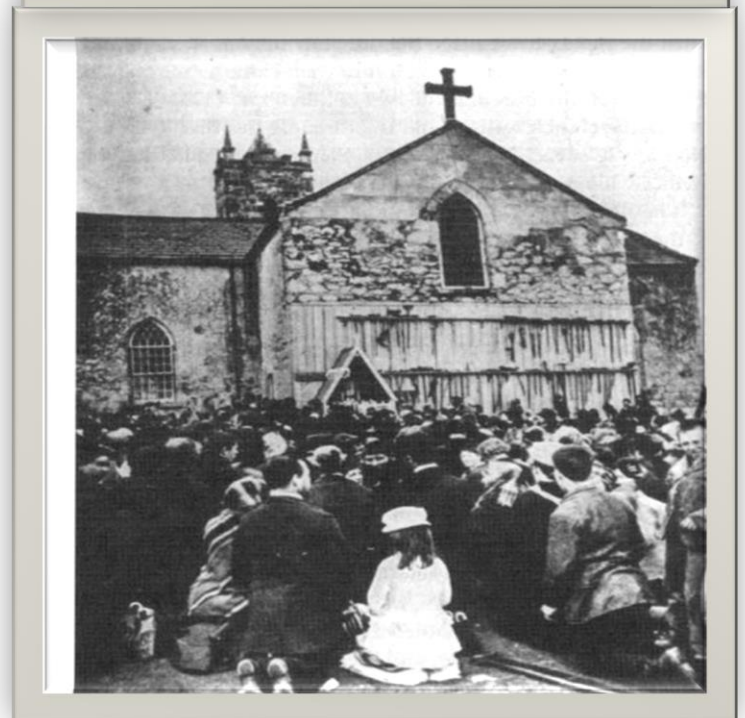
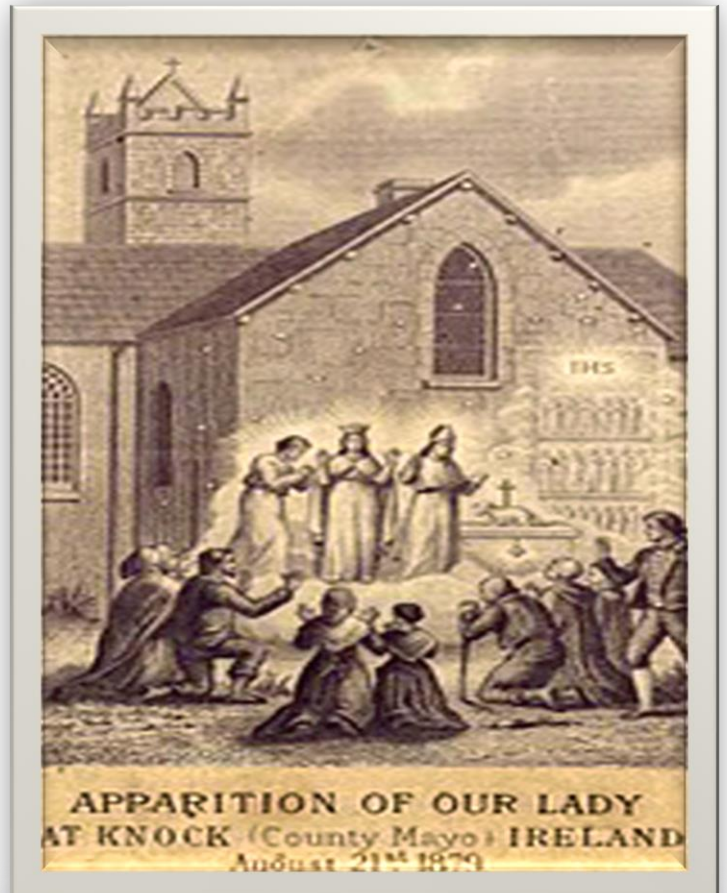


Our Lady of Knock (1879)

On August 21, 1879, it was a very rainy day in the little village of Knock in the country of Mayo. Margaret Byrne was walking in the torrential downpour to lock up the parish church nearby when she saw something brightly lit at the south end of the church near a large gable. Because of the harsh rainfall, she did not investigate further. She did not know that 30 minutes earlier, Mary McLoughlin, housekeeper of the parish priest, had actually noticed the same light. In the unusual glow she saw three large figures silhouetted—and guessed that maybe some new statues had been delivered to the church. It just so happened that Mary McLoughlin stopped by the Byrne household to visit. When she decided to leave around 8pm, another Mary sister of Margaret Byrne, decided to walk with the housekeeper as she returned home, and both saw the same unusual glow. But Mary Byrne was more curious about these new statues.

When she investigated more closely, she jumped back and was startled. “They’re not statues! They are moving~ It’s the blessed Virgin!” She identified them to be of the blessed virgin, St. Joseph, and St. John. Mary Byrne ran back home to tell her mother and her brother. Word spread quickly, and fourteen people gathered in the pouring rain to see this supernatural display. Here is a combined account from those witnesses. The entire wall of the church was bathed in a brilliant light, which could be seen from quite a distance away. Everything was raised about two feet of the ground. There was an altar, on top of which stood a lamb with a cross.



The altar and lamb were surrounded by angels, hovering above. Around them were golden stars or small brilliant lights, glittering like glass balls. To the left of the altar were the three figures: St. Joseph on the left, our lady in the middle, and St. John the Evangelist on the right. St. Joseph's hair and beard were gray and he leaned in a respectful manner toward toward Mary. St. John was dressed in Mass vestments with a bishop's miter on his head, a book in his left hand, and his right hand raised in blessing. Our lady was life-sized; the other two were smaller."The virgin's eyes were raised toward heaven with hands outstretched. Mary was beautiful. She wore a white gown and sash. A veil flowed from the back of her head to her feet.

On top of her head was a golden crown. Between the crown and the edge of the veil was a gold rose. Mary was almost iridescent. At first, no one dared to go very close to the images. They stood or knely at a distahce in the rain, becoming soaked, but not caring. Patrick Hill, age 14, dared to venture much closer and added even more details: The figure were full and round, three-dimensional, as if they had a body and life. They were about 2-3 feet out from the church wall. They said nothing, but as we approached, they seemed to go back a little toward the gable. I could see the pupils and iris of our lady's eyes. I could see the smooth texture of her milky skim. I was so close that I could see the lines and letters inside the book that St. John held. I also saw the wings of the angels fluttering. A 74-year old lady was so filled with joy that she tried to embrace Mary's feet, but could not find anything to touch-because Mary moved back abit.

All of the witnesses agree that they saw the fig-ures move in that hour and a half that they knelt before them. All noted that, despite the pouring rain, the three figures all re-mained dry. The ground beneath them and the church wall also-remained completely dry. All who passed



by were blessed with the ability to see this event. The glow from the church could be witnessed as much as a mile away- as farmer patrick walsh testified on the following day.

One of the participants, Judith Campbell, left the scene around 9pm to check on her ailing mother at home. Finding her mother lying on the floor passed out, she feared that her mother had died, trying to go out to see the vision at the church. At 9:30pm, Judith summoned the others at the church to come help her, and they all ran to see what had happened. But when they arrived at her mother's home, she was okay now. The people ran back to the church only to find that the light and images were gone now. Many healings and miracles have been documented at this shrine that honors family life. Miracles began as early as ten days after the apparition. A young girl, Delia Gordon, had experienced deafness and pain in her left ear. While visiting the apparition site, her mother put a small piece of cement from the wall of the church into her ear. Afterward, during Mass, Delia experienced an excruciating pain in her ear, followed by complete healing of her deafness and no further pain. In publication regarding the miracle of Knock, father Tom Neary reports that 687 miraculous cures were documented in that first year from 1879-1880. People were using the cement or grout from that church wall. Eventually wooden planks had to be placed over the wall to preserve it. Later a bigger church was built and raised to basilica status. Pope John Paul II came to Knock, Ireland, for the 100 anniversary of the apparitions in 1979. He held mass in the Basilica, anointed the sick, and prayed at the shrine. He presented a gold rose to the Shrine, in commemoration of the gold rose that Mary wore during the apparition.