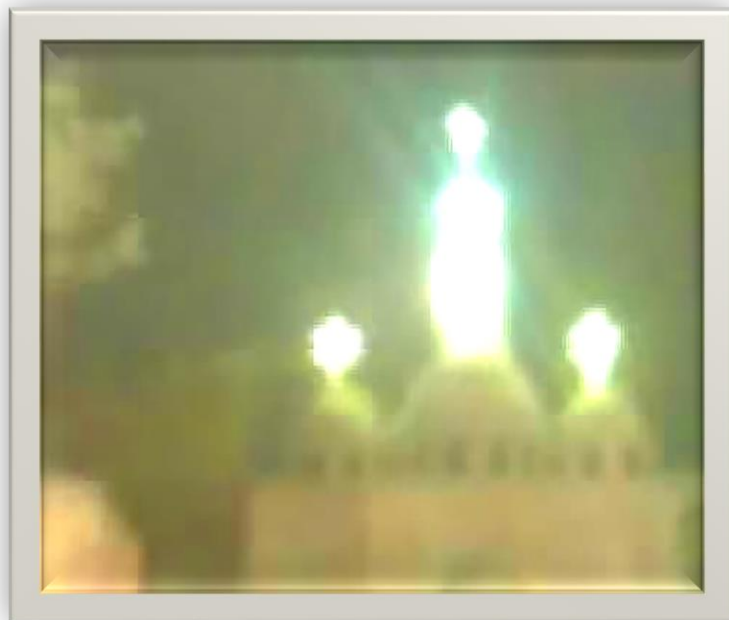


## OUR LADY OF EL-WARRAQ

WARRAQ AL-HADAR, GIZA, EGYPT 2009

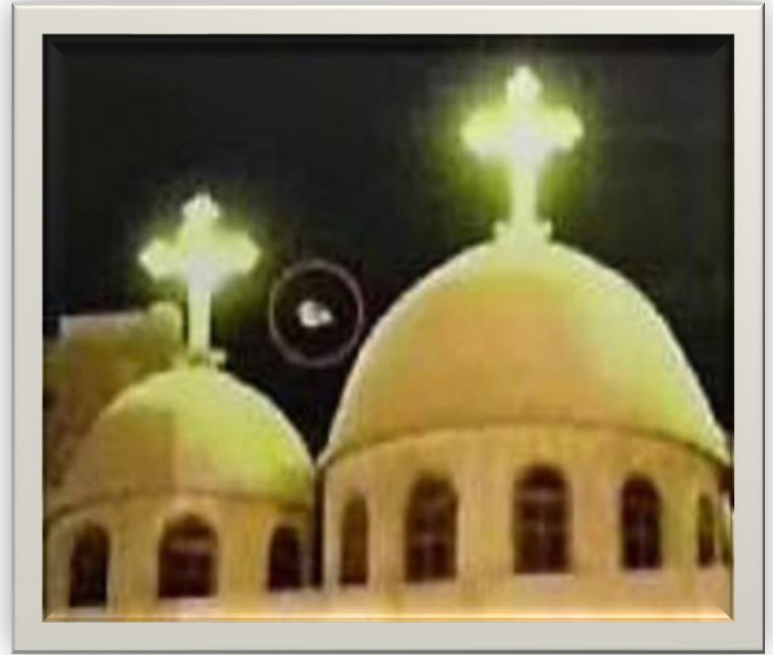
### APPARITION ON THE COPTIC CHURCH

THE little church that was named in honor of the Virgin Mary and the Archangel Michael was relatively unknown outside the country, but on the night of December 11, events took place that would be known throughout the world. On that night, a huge crowd gathered in front of the church while phone calls poured into the rectory of the parish priest, Father Dawoud. As Father wrote, “The phone calls were of people who said they had just seen an apparition of the Virgin Mary on the right dome of the church.” Father explained that Muslim neighbors were among the callers, including Haj, a neighbor and a dear friend who told me, “What are you doing here, Father? I have just seen Our Lady Mary with my own eyes. Go and see for yourself.” At first we thought that a little child was playing with a flash light, but then the light intensified and moved from the tree in front of the church entrance up to the right dome and an embodiment of the Virgin Mary could be easily recognized. She stayed there for a



while.

It is of especial benefit to hear the statement of a credible witness, especially when the witness is a bishop. In this case, it was the Coptic Orthodox Bishop Theodosios of Giza who issued a statement, On Friday, December 11, at 1 a.m., the Holy Virgin appeared at her full height in luminous robes above the middle dome of the church. Her dress was pure white and she wore a royal blue belt. She had a crown on her head, above which appeared the cross. The



crosses on top of the church's domes and towers glowed brightly with light. The Holy Virgin moved between the domes and onto the top of the church gate between the twin towers. The local residents all saw her. The apparition lasted from 1 a.m. until 4 a.m. on Friday and was recorded by cameras and cell phones. Some 3,000 people from the neighborhood, those from surrounding areas, and passersby gathered in the street in front of the church to see the apparition.

The bishop continues: I stayed up all night and saw doves appear suddenly in the sky. They flew in circles in front of the church before they vanished into thin air. They were floating rather than hovering with their wings. The bishop noted that doves do not usually fly at night. The bishop also mentioned that a star appeared suddenly and traveled across the sky before disappearing. Bishop Theodosios continued, "The huge crowd gathered around the church did not cease singing hymns and praises for the Holy Virgin." The Copts accepted the apparitions as a sign of love and approval since they coincided with the beginning of the Coptic month of Kiahk, better known as "Mary's month" which is dedicated to praising the Virgin's conception of Christ and the ending of the Coptic Church's Christmas celebration. As for the Episcopal approval of the visions, His Holiness Shenouda III and Anba Dumadius, Archbishop of Giza, issued a statement which described the apparition and ended with a prayer. "This is a great blessing for the church and for all the people of

Egypt. May her blessing and intercession benefit us all.”