

# The Statues

- In 1935 the newly founded Knock Shrine Society considered having the apparition represented at the gable. Drawings were shown to Mary O'Connell but none satisfied her. It was 1960 before Archbishop Walsh permitted Judy Coyne to plan the erection of statues representing the apparition.

- The Roman sculptor, Professor Lorenzi Ferri, was contacted. He showed Mrs. Coyne some clay models but she thought them inadequate. They did not portray Our Lady's rapt expression during the apparition as described by Mrs. O'Connell. Then Professor Ferri had a heart attack and work ceased.

- After this Mrs. Coyne attended a Mass said by Padre Pio and prayed fervently that the statues would be completed. Some days later she visited Professor's Ferri's studio and was astonished to find the statues completed in white Carrara marble and that of Our Lady looking exactly as she wanted it.

- Professor Ferri explained how during the time Mrs Coyne was attending Padre Pio's Mass he felt an urge to leave his bed and finish the statues. Eventually they were erected at the apparition gable.



# Knock Today

- Knock has not escaped the influence of modernism. It has ugly buildings and uninspiring ceremonies. But traditional devotions are making a comeback.

- The ceremonies and conferences organised by the Society of St. Pius X in September 2019 illustrate this. We can also make individual or group pilgrimages which might include the Way of the Cross, saying Rosaries while circling the old church and various other prayers.

- Certainly we need Divine intervention to restore the true faith in Ireland and throughout the world.



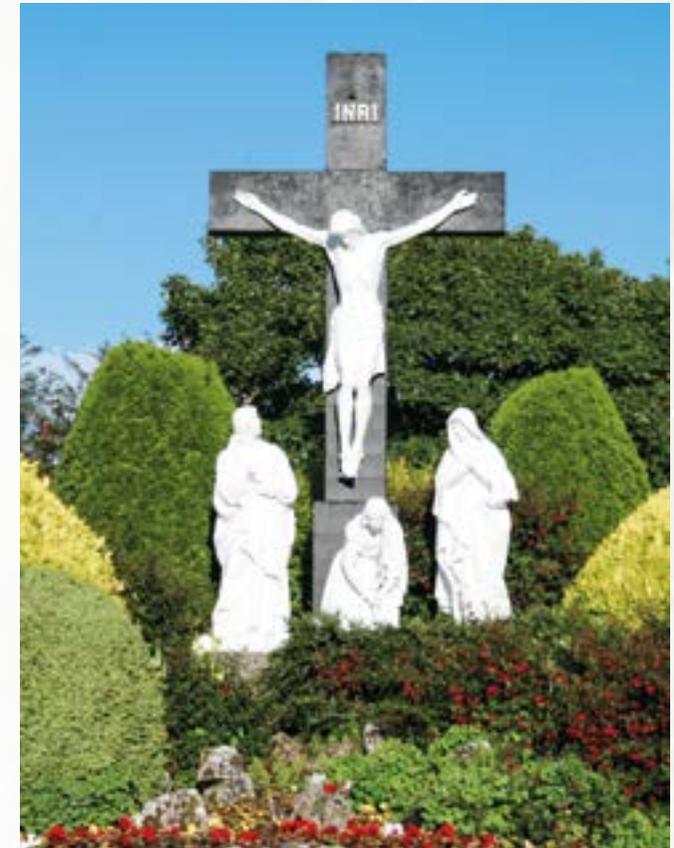
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# The Knock Apparition



Like Nazareth before the Holy Family's arrival, Knock was an insignificant place before 1879. Yet St. Patrick, whose Irish mission began shortly after the proclamation of Mary's Divine Maternity, is said to have prophesied that Knock would one day be a place of great devotion.

# The Apparition of Our Lady

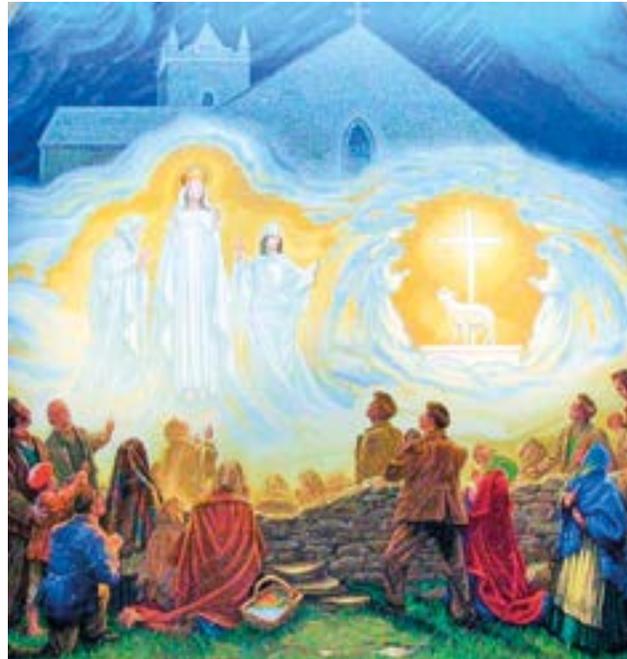
- On the 21<sup>st</sup> of August 1879 Mary McLoughlin passed the church accompanied by Mary Byrne who noticed that the 'statues' were moving. Exclaiming it was the Blessed Virgin she ran to tell others. Soon some twenty people had gathered. Many would remain before the apparition for two hours before it vanished. As reports spread Archbishop John McHale of Tuam set up a commission of priests which examined fifteen witnesses.

- Mary Byrne told them that she saw three figures at the church's gable the central one being Our Lady wearing a large crown. St. Joseph was on her right and St. John was on her left. They all appeared white. Our Lady was gazing heavenwards with both hands raised and facing each other. St. John wore a short mitre and held a book. St. Joseph was bowing towards Our Lady. To the left of the figures was a lamb in front of a cross and resting on an altar. Although it was raining the area around the apparition was dry. All the seers agreed on the main points of the apparition.



- No words were spoken but messages were conveyed. It was considered as a consolation to the persecuted Irish Catholics.

**The presence of St. John, Our Lady, the Lamb of God and the cross suggested the Apocalypse. These, along with Our Lady's priestly gestures, recalled the importance of the Mass. The colour white signifies Marian devotion and the virtue of purity. The crown recalled Mary's queenship. The presence of so much light reminds us of Christ the Light of the World. St. John's Gospel makes many allusions to light and darkness.**



So there is much which the Knock apparition teaches even without words.

- Earlier in the day Archdeacon Cavanagh said his hundredth Mass for the Holy Souls. So we are reminded that we too must pray for them. Many attributed the apparition to their intercession. Mary Byrne maintained that the holiness of the Parish Priest was also a factor.

Knock had many large pilgrimages.



## Knock's Revival

- There was a decline in devotions in the early twentieth century. District Justice Liam Coyne and his wife Judy felt inspired, while visiting Lourdes, to remedy things. A film was made and Liam toured the country explaining Knock's significance. He also made a radio broadcast. He was persuaded by Knock's Parish Priest, Canon John Grealy, to write a book. A copy was sent to Pope Pius XII who responded warmly. In 1929 there was a large pilgrimage to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the apparition with an address by Archbishop Gilmartin.

- In 1937 another inquiry was held. The three remaining witnesses were questioned. Shortly afterwards one of these, Mary O'Connell (nee Byrne), declared on her death-bed that she was ready to go before God proclaiming her belief in the apparition. Dr. Gilmartin, who by now more openly favoured the apparition, sent the inquiry's report to Rome.

- There was a large pilgrimage in 1940 imploring Our Lady to protect Ireland during World War II. In 1954, a Marian year, Pope Pius XII blessed the Knock Shrine Banner. Rome was becoming increasingly aware of Knock. In 1979 Pope John Paul II declared it the chief goal of his Irish visit.