

Miracles

*An Encyclopedia of People, Places,
and Supernatural Events
from Antiquity to the Present*

Patrick J. Hayes, Editor



An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC
Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Miracles : an encyclopedia of people, places, and supernatural events from antiquity to the present / Patrick J. Hayes, editor.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-61069-598-5 (alk. paper)—ISBN 978-1-61069-599-2 (ebook)

1. Miracles—Encyclopedias. 2. Supernatural—Encyclopedias. 3. Marvelous, The—Encyclopedias. 4. Religion—Encyclopedias. 5. Religions—Encyclopedias.

I. Hayes, Patrick J., 1966- editor.

BL487.M574 2016

202'.117—dc23 201502574

ISBN: 978-1-61069-598-5

EISBN: 978-1-61069-599-2

20 19 18 17 16 1 2 3 4 5

This book is also available on the World Wide Web as an eBook.
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ABC-CLIO

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130 Cremona Drive, P.O. Box 1911

Santa Barbara, California 93116-1911

This book is printed on acid-free paper ☺

Manufactured in the United States of America

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the decision being declared on February 2, 1872. A basilica was built, and pilgrimage has continued through to the present day, being especially important during World War I and World War II in which France was in conflict once again with Germany.

Pontmain was in many ways the model apparition from the Catholic Church perspective. The message was simple and noncontroversial; children were the seers, but adults, including a priest and nuns, witnessed them; and the prophecy was apparently fulfilled within a very short time. The apparition occurred in a time of crisis, but there was a beneficial outcome locally (despite military defeat for France). It was not without its political implications. Cheryl Porte's work points out how the apparition supported a Catholic French identity at a time of ideological crisis during which the Third Republic was founded, with many detrimental consequences for the church.

Chris Maunder

See also: Apparitions; France, Miracles in

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Our Lady of Subang Jaya

On November 9, 2012, an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared on a glass window panel on the seventh floor of the outpatient center of Sime Darby Medical Centre, a private hospital in Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. The image was first seen by a window cleaner. Soon after, thousands of people gathered outside the hospital around the image to pray, offer flowers, light candles, and sing hymns. The image also drew the attention of people of other faiths. Visitors from East Malaysia and neighboring countries such as Brunei and Singapore came to view the image for themselves. Although the image could only be seen from the outside, as the access to the stairwell on the seventh floor was closed, those who managed to touch the panel claimed that it was not paint.

The image of Mary resembles popular Catholic art in which Mary is depicted as the Immaculate Conception. She stands upright, a halo around her head and dressed in a veil, a blue mantle, and a white tunic that is gathered at the waist. Her

arms are outstretched in a gesture of embrace and welcome. Some onlookers also claimed that they could see an additional image of an adult Jesus Christ on a cross in a panel below that of Mary. They believed that the images of Mary and Christ were moving and gradually becoming clearer. Although some admitted that they saw an image, they were uncertain if it was of divine origin. The images were shared on various social media platforms.

Some believed that the appearance of Mary was a call for prayer and good deeds, particularly for world peace. They drew a parallel between this incident and the various apparitions of Mary around the world. Others understood the event as a test of faith. Many considered her appearance at a hospital to mean that infirmities could be healed through faith. Several people even claimed that they were physically cured and their prayers answered due to the miraculous appearance. Some regarded the appearance as a sign that God was reaching out to people and inviting them to follow the right path through Mary. Local clergy called for calm and prudence in relation to the incident.

Soon after the incident, St. Thomas More Parish in Subang Jaya sought permission from the hospital to have the old and delicate panels on which the images appeared removed and taken to the Church of Our Lady of Lourdes in Klang, approximately 21 kilometers (13 miles) away. The hospital agreed to this request, and the transfer was witnessed by the leaders and parishioners of St. Thomas More Parish. Since its transfer, the panels have attracted an average of 200 visitors on weekdays and between 800 and 1,000 on weekends. Local Roman Catholic authorities have since emphasized the need for an authentication of the images and the experiences of the witnesses.

Joseph N. Goh

See also: Apparitions

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Our Lady of Walsingham

Although the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham is medieval in origin, 1997 marked the centenary of the restoration of devotional life at England's famed Marian shrine of Walsingham, Norfolk, England's Nazareth. The Walsingham Ballad, the name usually given to the earliest written (and subsequently printed) account of the miraculous events of 1061, was written in the mid-fifteenth century (ca. 1460) and printed by Richard Pynson in 1495. Though often referred to as "The Pynson Ballad," its author is unknown. The only extant copy was discovered in the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge. According to this ballad, Our Lady appeared to a noble widow, Lady Richeldis de Faverches, in 1061, asking her to build a chapel. Mary led Lady Richeldis "in spirit" to Nazareth to show her the place where the Archangel Gabriel had greeted her and directed the widow to take measurements of the house so that she could build one like it at Walsingham. In this spot, the Virgin Mary explained, the people would celebrate the Annunciation, the "root of mankind's gracious redemption," and would find help in their needs. Three times Lady Richeldis experienced this vision and request. This confirmed her desire to have the chapel constructed, but the directions about the location were unclear to her and to the carpenters. When the carpenters could make no progress in building, Lady Richeldis spent the night in prayer. Her supplications were answered immediately, for the ballad recounts that Our Lady herself had angels complete the construction on the site she wanted, just 200 feet from where the workmen had labored.

As a site of pilgrimage, by 1500 Our Lady of Walsingham reputedly ranked second only to that of Thomas Becket in England and third in all of Europe behind Rome and Santiago de Compostella. Many miracles were attributed to her, but as a source of medieval miracles, the Pynson Ballad gives no specifics, merely vague references to the "Lame made hole and blynde restored to syghte / Maryners vexed with-tempest safe to porte brought / Defe, wounded and lunatyke that hyder haue sought / and also lepers." The anonymous author writes of people who suffered from "wicket spyrytes also moche vexacyon" and assures the reader "of thys is no dought" the "Dede agayne reuyued."

Of more certain documentation is a miracle that Edward I personally attributed to Our Lady of Walsingham. Having been saved from a piece of falling

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