

# The Feast of Our Lady of Knock



**The Apparition of Our Lady,  
St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist**

**Knock, County Mayo, Ireland  
August 21, 1879**

## **The Story of the Apparition of Our Lady at Knock**

On the evening of August 21, 1879 Mary McLoughlin, the housekeeper to the parish priest of Knock, County Mayo, Ireland, was astonished to see the outside south wall of the church bathed in a mysterious light; there were three figures standing in front of the wall, which she mistook for replacements of the stone figures destroyed in a storm. She rushed through the rain to her friend Margaret Byrne's house.

After a half hour Mary decided to leave and Margaret's sister Mary agreed to walk home with her. As they passed the church they saw an amazing vision very clearly: Standing out from the gable and to the west of it appeared the Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph and St. John. The figure of the Blessed Virgin was life-size, while the others seemed to be neither as large nor as tall. They stood a little away from the gable wall about two feet from the ground. The Virgin was erect with her eyes toward Heaven, and she was wearing a large white cloak hanging in full folds; on her head was a large crown.

Mary Byrne ran to tell her family while Mary McLoughlin gazed at the apparition. Soon a crowd gathered and all saw the apparition. The parish priest, Archdeacon Cavanaugh, did not come out, however, and his absence was a disappointment to the devout villagers. Among the witnesses were Patrick Hill and John Curry. As Patrick later described the scene: 'The figures were fully rounded, as if they had a body and life. They did not speak but, as we drew near, they retreated a little towards the wall.' Patrick reported that he got close enough to make out the words in the book held by the figure of St. John. An old woman named Bridget Trench drew closer to embrace the feet of the Virgin, but the figure seemed always beyond reach. Others out in the fields and some distance away saw a strange light around the church. The vision lasted for about three hours and then faded.

In due course many of the witnesses died. But Mary Byrne married, raised six children, living her entire life in Knock. When interviewed again in 1936 at the age of eighty-six, her account did not vary from the first report she gave in 1879.

The Church approved the apparition in 1971 as being quite probable, although it has never been formally stated.

# The Knock Chalice



The chalice used in today's liturgy belonged to Rev. William Fahey and was bequeathed to his God Son, brother Hibernian, Bif Bilmer. Fr. Fahey was ordained to the Priesthood on May 8, 1954. Inscribed on the bottom of the chalice, in addition to the date of his ordination, is "The Year of Mary". The chalice base is inlaid with four medallions, depicting different images. The first is an image of the Crucifixion, the second the Blessed Mother, the third Saint Joseph and the fourth Saint John the Evangelist. It's believed that, because he was ordained to the Priesthood in a Marion year, Fr. Fahey chose the images of the Apparition at Knock for his chalice.

## The Medallions on the base of Fr. Fahey's chalice



The Crucifixion



Blessed Mother



Saint Joseph



Saint John the Evangelist



#### Prayer to Our Lady of Knock

Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland, you gave hope to our people in a time of distress and comforted them in sorrow. You have inspired countless pilgrims to pray with confidence to your divine Son, remembering His promise: "Ask and you shall receive, Seek and you shall find".

Help me to remember that we are all pilgrims on the road to heaven. Fill me with love and concern for my brothers and sisters in Christ, especially those who live with me. Comfort me when I am sick or lonely or depressed. Teach me how to take part ever more reverently in the holy Mass. Pray for me now, and at the hour of my death.

Amen.