



## The Burning Bush - Online article archive

### PROMISED YOU A MIRACLE

Below is an article from the Belfast Telegraph of 16th November that highlights the blindness, superstition, hypocrisy and folly that have dominated the minds of Irish men and women who have followed devotedly the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church!

Where there was a rejection of the 'apparitions' and so-called 'miracles' referred to in the article, it was born out of a rejection of God altogether and not out of a love of the truth of God, set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

All one can say is, "Poor Ireland. How we need to pray for her people"!

The 100 years since these incidents have seen the Roman Catholic Church inflict even more horrors upon those who have followed faithfully the teachings of the monstrous deception of popery! Countless thousands in Ireland have now forsaken all belief in God because of the wicked and devilish abuse that the 'Church' they trusted with their souls and their children, betrayed them so utterly!

The result of that is that their "latter end is worse with them than the beginning"!

Ivan Foster.

18th November 2019.



#### **New book explores 1920 ceasefire over Virgin Mary apparitions**

The dramatic events that transfixed Templemore, Co Tipperary are the subject of a new book.

Author John Reynolds details the controversy and the 16-year-old boy at the centre of it

Devoted following: children pray beside statues that were reported to have started bleeding

On August 16, 1920, District Inspector William Wilson of the Royal Irish Constabulary was shot dead in Templemore, Co Tipperary by the IRA. On the same night, Templemore town hall was burned down by soldiers as a reprisal, resulting in the accidental death of two soldiers from the Northamptonshire Regiment. The first reports of "supernatural manifestations accompanied by cures" appeared in newspapers the following day. Attention centred on the newsagent shop of Thomas Dwan at Main Street, Templemore and a cottage in Curraheen, near the village of Gortagarry, seven miles away.

It was reported that religious statues in Dwan's shop, the nearby RIC barracks and the cottage were shedding tears of blood.

Sixteen-year-old farm labourer Jimmy Walsh, who lived in the cottage, claimed he was experiencing Marian apparitions and that a "holy well" had appeared in the floor of his bedroom.

The Tipperary Star reported that, after the burning of Templemore town hall, "statues from which blood had been oozing were taken by Walsh to Templemore from the cottage in Curraheen. It was believed by local people that this action had saved the town from destruction". The Limerick Leader wrote: "Our Lady has saved Templemore."

As news of the alleged miracles and cures spread, upwards of 15, 000 people per day were making the pilgrimage to Templemore and then on to Curraheen. The town was renamed "Pilgrimville", or "Pilgrimstown"



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by newspapers.

A correspondent for the Catholic Times visited Templemore on August 23 and wrote that his train from Dublin was packed with pilgrims, including "the halt, the maim and the blind". He estimated that 8,000 people were outside Dwan's house, many having been there overnight.

He himself saw four statues, some with blood trickling down the face, neck, breasts, or body. Hugh Martin of the Daily News wrote that he saw scores of pilgrims drop to their knees, cover their heads and pray the rosary.

Thousands were in the square, including "paralysed children, old men with the palsy and lads with withered limbs. There was every deformity, from warts to a club foot, and almost every chronic malady, from fainting fits to consumption."

The Daily Mirror described: "Sinn Fein volunteers armed with heavy sticks making vain attempts to preserve order, but the crowd could not restrain itself. Women fainted by the score."

Walsh, a "simple-mannered youth", as he was referred to by one newspaper, achieved international fame, while adverts appeared offering, "photographs of the boy to whom the blessed virgin appeared" for sale, as well as other souvenirs.

The Daily News reported that "poor wretches long past help were dragged through boreens to their inevitable disappointment. The picture of one young woman staggering upwards with her tortured child will be long in leaving me".

One journalist wrote that he came, "to see a miracle and saw one. It was not a miracle of bleeding statues, however, but of pathetic belief".

The Limerick Leader reported the case of Martin Monahan, the first person to claim that he had been cured. Monahan had been badly wounded during the Battle of the Somme in 1916. He told reporters that he had "crawled across the road" to Dwan's house.

Walsh rubbed a crucifix on his wounded leg before praying with him. Monahan claimed that he had been able to walk unaided from Dwan's house.

Sergeant Shea, of the RIC in Templemore, wrote that Monahan was known to everybody in the town, "dragging his twisted legs between wooden crutches". After his visit to Walsh, however, Shea said that he saw Monahan "leaping around like a circus tumbler in front of a laughing, weeping, praying, hysterical crowd".

Shea went on to say that, "outside the little cottage at Curraheen, the pile of discarded crutches got bigger".

The official position of the Catholic Church towards events in Templemore was one of "extreme reserve".

The parish priest of Templemore, Rev Kiely, refused to visit the statues, saying: "If it is a prank, it will fizzle out; if not, why should I stop it?"

An informal truce between the IRA, the RIC and Army developed in the extraordinary circumstances which prevailed. IRA volunteers were even allowed to marshal the huge crowds.

IRA brigade officers decided that decisive action should be taken to halt the influx of pilgrims, as they had started to view the "whole business with incredulity".

Pilgrims began to pay IRA men to jump the queue and some volunteers who had previously been abstemious and enthusiastic, "took to drink and began to forget that they were engaged in a life-and-death struggle for the country's freedom".

Walsh told his interrogators that he had spoken with the apparition and the Virgin Mary had indicated her



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approval of the IRA campaign and wished to see the fight intensified.

Local IRA commander Jimmy Leahy found it difficult "to keep a straight face", concluding that Walsh was either "mentally abnormal, or a hypocrite". Leahy contacted Michael Collins directly to express his concern and Collins ordered that Walsh be brought to Dublin for questioning.

Collins ordered Dan Breen to interrogate, "this saint from Templemore... the fellow who operates the bleeding statue, to which Breen reluctantly agreed".

Walsh was only 16 years of age, but was now under interrogation by Dan Breen, a wanted man with a fearsome reputation, following the Soloheadbeg ambush.

Breen spoke to Walsh and concluded that he "was a fake", then spoke to Collins, giving his opinion that the Templemore apparitions and miracles were not genuine. Collins irreverently replied: "One can't take any notice of what you say, Breen, because you have no religion!"

Collins had also been directly contacted by Catholic clergy who claimed that IRA volunteers in Tipperary had manufactured a statue that bled "to raise money to buy guns".

A courier was sent to the county to bring back one of the statues for examination. Collins "took hold of the statue, banged it off the side of the desk and out fell the works of the alarm clock". "I knew it," said Collins. "That was the end of the bleeding statue."

The internal mechanism of an alarm clock had been concealed inside the statue, connected to fountain pen inserts containing sheep's blood. When the clock struck a certain time, it would send a spurt of blood through the statue's heart, giving the impression that the statue was bleeding.

Shortly after the phenomenon of the Templemore miracles had ended, Walsh left Ireland for Australia. He never returned.

Having been labelled as a possible spy by Breen, he was in danger of being executed by the IRA, but he was only 16 and many people believed that he was a genuine visionary.

His hasty emigration to Australia may not only have saved his life, but also solved a major problem for the IRA in what to do with him.