

Apparitions

Many people have a skewed understanding of apparitions and their implications. Some believe that only the very holy experience these miracles, which is not the case. Others think that only people who are emotionally imbalanced experience these “miracles”, while others (including Catholics) display unreserved skepticism. This is not difficult to understand since, at least once a year, we hear on the local news about somebody seeing Jesus on a can of Spaghettios or the Blessed Mother on their buttered English muffin. After all – didn’t Jesus warn that there would be those who would claim to see him in a field or other place (**Matt. 24:25-26**)? He was speaking of his 2nd Coming and not about private revelations. If his warning included apparitions, St. Paul would not have claimed to see him on the road to Damascus (**Acts 9:3-5**) long after his Ascension to heaven.

On the other hand, we also have those who would believe in any apparition they see on the evening news. It seems that some need to see some *proof* in order to have faith. There is a need to experience an almost magical quality just so that they can say that they witnessed it. Both camps have valid reasons for their belief and/or skepticism, as does the Church who investigates these matters *heavily* before rendering a decision or opinion. In Church-approved apparitions such as **Our Lady of Lourdes** and **Fatima** or the appearance of our Lord to **Sister Faustina and the Divine Mercy**, these matters were looked upon favorably by the Church but only after exhaustive research, prayer and intense scrutiny.

Catholic’s are not obliged to believe in or have a devotion to these types of private revelations. However, they are efficacious for us in that they display the power of God and illustrate his infinite love for us, including the Marian apparitions which happen solely by the power of God. For Catholics to cling onto every reported “apparition” seen on television may be imprudent, we should look to the Church to guide us in these matters because of the Authority given her by Christ himself (**Matt. 16:18-19, 18:15-18, Luke 10:16, John 16:12-15, 20:21-23**).

On the other hand we cannot simply reject every apparition as bogus, either. We must remember that our Lord appears to us in the form of bread and wine during *every* mass in the Holy Eucharist.