

## Apparitions

- Any people who consider joining the Catholic Church look with wonder at the phenomenon of apparitions, that is, visions of Heavenly beings to humans.
- These Heavenly beings can be seen, heard, and sometimes touched, and they communicate directly with the person or persons receiving the vision, who are conscious, not asleep. By far the most frequent person to appear is Mary, the Mother of God.
- The Church is exceedingly slow to recognize or approve claims of apparitions.
- The Church has never required the faithful to believe in any apparition since apparitions cannot add anything to the saving truths given in Scripture and guarded in the Church's Tradition.
- Belief in apparitions, such as those of the Mother of God at Guadalupe in 1531, Lourdes in 1858, and Fatima in 1917, is not necessary for salvation. A faithful Catholic can accept them or not.
- When the Church does undertake to study and examine an apparition, it does so in minute detail. Its first concern is a detailed analysis of the message given to the visionary, to determine whether it contains anything contrary to the Catholic Faith as taught by the Church.
- Every facet of the event (or series of events) is scrutinized, often with the help of experts in various scientific disciplines, including physicians and psychologists, and of known sceptics, even atheists.
- Not only is the apparition intensely reviewed but the visionaries themselves are also subject to detailed, even excruciating, questioning and evaluation, for many reported apparitions and visions are not authentic and may even be deliberate hoaxes.
- The sign at Fatima was an exceedingly remarkable natural wonder, when the sun danced in the sky, throwing off all the colours of the rainbow, then fell toward the earth before returning to its normal place. This sign was witnessed by many thousands of people.
- Each of these places, as well as the sites of many other approved apparitions, have become places of pilgrimage where great churches have been erected to the glory of God, where souls are continually invited to greater repentance and conversion of heart and frequent miracles of healing take place.
- From experience, we know that there have been significant consequences, most of them good, resulting from these apparitions.
- In less than a decade, the apparition of Guadalupe resulted in the conversion of over eight million Mexicans to Catholicism.

- The spring uncovered at the grotto at Lourdes has remained famous for its miraculous healing powers, attested to by the most credible physicians.
- The prophecies of Fatima, especially with respect to Russia and to the advent of World War II, were borne out by subsequent events and led to the consecration of the entire world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by St John Paul II.