

All Saints' Parish
60 East 129 Street
New York, N. Y.

The visit of the Blessed Mother of God to Knock plainly told and published for the honor and glory of God and His Blessed Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

By John O'Keane

To His Grace:
The Most Rev. Dr. Gilmartin,
Archbishop of Tuam.

May it please your Grace, I have read in the "Catholic News" of New York with unbounded pleasure, joy and consolation your Grace's sermon at Knock on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Apparition or the Visit of the Blessed Mother of God to Knock.

It is my most wonderful and miraculous privilege, notwithstanding my unutterable unworthiness, to confirm and bear testimony to the holy presence of God and His Blessed Mother at Knock in their holy Priest's house, the late Archdeacon Kavanagh, parish priest of Knock. May his soul rest in peace, Amen.

I accepted charge of the West in the movement for Independence and having vowed to organize, prepare, and arm the people to strike a manly blow for the National and Sovereign Independence of our beloved Country, to lift her out of degradation and misery and out of humiliation and slavery, and place on her Virgin Brow the immortal Wreath which her sufferings, sacrifices, and martyrdom for fidelity to the faith and yearning for freedom, have endeared her to her children in all ages past, present and future. Notwithstanding these ideals of patriotism, unless they give glory to God and His Blessed Mother, our sacrifices would be all in vain.

The Patriotic and Spirited men of Knock invited me to organize their parish as they wished to be prepared and ready to answer their Country's call. The saintly Pastor, Archdeacon Kavanagh, peace and glory to his soul, Amen, heard of our intention; warned and cautioned his flock to be on their guard against the great danger of making any such dangerous movement. But, Your Grace, we were determined that on the cause should go amidst joy, wail, or woe, until our beloved Country stood and took her place amongst the nations of the world.

I made an appointment with the men of the lower end of the parish around the Lake of Manning to be assembled and ready to receive arms on a certain night. So I journeyed from Claremoris on a Sunday night with a load of arms and ammunition to distribute them among the men of the organization. It was late at night when we got through with the meeting. On my journey home to Claremoris I must have reached the Chapel about two o'clock Monday morning.

The Chapel was miraculously illuminated and as I reached opposite the gable a blaze of supernatural light came rolling down from the clouds which illuminated the gable. This was the advent of the Apparition or the coming Visit of the Blessed Mother of God to Knock. The people who attended Vespers on the following Saturday evening on leaving the Chapel witnessed the apparition on the gable that I have mentioned. The report spread rapidly that the Blessed Virgin was seen at the Chapel, the Blessed Mother of God. Of course, I believed without any doubt as I was the first witness to the light that came rolling down from heaven to prepare for the miraculous visit of the Blessed Mother of God.

I lived then in Claremoris and paid several visits to the Chapel; so did my father and brother from the parish of Miltown. My father was suffering from a painful illness for years owing to having saved the old parish priest of Miltown, Father Patrick Garvey, from a dangerous fall. May their souls rest in peace.

Your Grace, I was not satisfied with my father's first visit, so I wrote or sent word that we would go on a pilgrimage and spend the night there. I made the following preparation for the journey; I visited our Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament and offered my visit and fast for the journey. I had a most favorable opportunity of speaking to our Saviour in His Holy Tabernacle. I begged of our Saviour to accept of my visit and fast; to have mercy on my poor father on account of his painful illness; whereas, I was going home to take him to Knock on a pilgrimage. Our dear, sweet Saviour likes to hear us mention our troubles by mentioning them to His Sacred Heart in the Blessed Sacrament, not but that His Divine Majesty knows and sees them all, yet He loves to hear us talk to Him in our visits and prayers.

So on Thursday night we set out on our pilgrimage. We arrived at the Chapel about half past eleven o'clock. We said prayers at the gable which I witnessed lighted the year before with the supernatural light from heaven. So after praying for some time I told Father of my intention to bring him to the priest that he might pray over him. So we hastened towards the priest's residence that we might see him before retiring to sleep. As we reached the gate I noticed a red light in one of the windows; so I said to Father that we were lucky to be on time as the light showed. Now, Your Grace, when we came close to the house the light disappeared. I realized afterwards that the red light indicated the holy presence of our Saviour in the house. I knocked at the side door; it was immediately opened and as we entered, the place was miraculously illumined. But, Your Grace, we were amazed when

we realized afterward that we were there and then in the holy presence of God and His Blessed Mother, and that we were unconscious and amazed that we were standing in their holy presence and asking questions of the Blessed Mother of God and she condescending to answer them. I asked was Father Kavanagh gone to sleep; the answer was "Yes." I said that we were sorry as we had come a long distance and that we expected to see him that he might pray over my father.

I also asked was the housekeeper, Miss McLoughlin, gone to rest. "Yes" was the answer. We paused for some time before speaking again. The Blessed Mother, as we realized afterwards, kept continually looking at us. I mentioned the coldness of the night; that Knock was always a cold place of no shelter. So the Blessed Mother said that she believed it was a cold night. Immediately after those words we felt quite warm and comfortable. After spending about two hours in the place and in the presence of God and His Blessed Mother, I said to Father that we would now get ready and leave for home by going to the Chapel and finishing our prayers. So Father walked towards the door to leave. The Blessed Mother looked at me and revealed one side of her holy face before opening the door. I turned back and said: "Good night." The Blessed Mother of God answered me by bidding us good night.

Father did not bother much about the affairs of the world after this wonderful and miraculous sight, but took to prayer and preparation for death. About two years afterwards I had to leave for America, owing to the treachery of the Government arresting, imprisoning and killing the patriots.

Your Grace, seeing that escape was impossible for me without aid from heaven, I appealed to the Blessed Mother of God, for her protection. I retired every day for a week to the woods to pray to her. I carried a picture of her Dolors and prayed the whole week before her holy picture. It looked as though I was unconsciously making a novena in honor of the Blessed Mother's Dolors.

On the following Sunday morning about three o'clock, an angel from God came into my bedroom and awoke me. I realized by his holy presence the meaning of his blessed visit, that he was sent to protect me. The home was enveloped in a storm during his holy presence. I attended Vespers that Sunday evening, in the Chapel of my native parish of Miltown, I returned home to take a lasting farewell of my dear mother, brothers and sisters. It was a sad parting. The officers of the Crown came on Thursday night to arrest me, but they were too late as I got on the boat at Queenstown in time. I hurried to the steerage-room. The Crown detective or officer came on board to search and take me off, but was frustrated in his search by the ringing of the Captain's bell to clear the boat of all non-passengers.

Your Grace can understand that but for the mercy of God and the protection of His Blessed Mother I was doomed. I have had four providential escapes from death during my life. From all and every one of them I have been saved by the mercy of our Saviour and the protection of His Blessed Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The following are some acts of gratitude to God and His Blessed Mother. I learned from Father Disken, P.P. of Miltown that the altar of God of my native parish needed a mass book. I considered it a most wonderful privilege to be allowed to place such a wonderful gift on the holy altar of God; a mass book for the honor and glory of God and His Blessed Mother.

My son donated one also for the altar of the Bally Glass Chapel of the same parish. Father Disken promised to have our names inscribed on the gifts. Our Saviour who condescended to mention the reward of the cup of cold water will condescend to accept and reward our offering for His honor and glory and to His Blessed Mother.

I pay a visit to our Saviour some days three times in All Saints' parish church, to thank him for His Mercy and His Blessed Mother and for their sufferings and sacrifices on Calvary's Hill for our salvation, notwithstanding our unworthiness and ingratitude. I recite the rosary every night in honor of the Mother of God.

The late Pastor of All Saints' was my kind and dear friend, Monsignor Power; may he rest in peace, Amen. The present pastor, Father Cronan, will certify to my faith and character. I am living in All Saints' parish forty-five years.

Your Grace, I am sorry to have to mention that Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and His Blessed Mother appeared to my father and myself in deep sorrow on that night.

Our Lady of Knock, pray for us!

I remain, Your Grace's obedient and faithful servant,

John O'Keane