

Blessed Mother: Appears To Us Daily

Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés | Dec. 19, 2008 | El Rio Debajo del Rio

Editor's Note: If you are looking for Bishop Thomas Gumbleton's homily for the third Sunday of Advent, please follow this link: [Third Sunday of Advent](#) [1]. Dr. Estes column begins below:

We have, too often, been led to believe that appearances of Blessed Mother ... and her precious little Son ... are rare, only occurring to those who are purest of pure.

That's not so. This very day, millions of ordinary souls have experienced sightings and signs of the Blessed Mother. And tomorrow and all days forward, there will be more sightings of her in the millions, if not the billions.

And those who see her, perceive her, sense what they are seeing when they see it ... are not purest of pure. Those who see her are the little santitos of this earth, those who are in the midst of lucha, struggle; those who are "working on" what it might mean to be holy in the midst of a sea of garbage; those who were just minding their own very mundane business ... when all of a sudden ...

there she was, breaking through the worlds to manifest her essence or presence or provocation, or intelligence.

In her visitations to us, some magnitude or perspective or instruction from beyond this world is made clear, irrefutable to the soul ...

Yet as usual, afterward, the little monkey-ego may have its endless frets: "Did I see what I saw? Hear what I heard? Sense what I felt? Did I really? No, not me. I am not worthy." Or, "How would I know? I must have imagined it. Surely if it was she, she would have appeared as I see in all the paintings, laden with accoutrements of the wealthy, with golden-tipped everything, and clean ironed clothes. She would have made the sun spin. She would have done some incontrovertible miraculous thing that 50 other people could validate with replicative science-based certainty."

But, actually, Our Lady often appears in the garb of the person she is speaking to, guiding, nudging, showing in ways each person might best understand ... if they don't allow ego-monkey to appropriate and thereby, with its

small simian mind, invalidate instead of be invigorated by the numen.

In the experiences of thousands of those who have beheld her, Our Lady most often does not speak in high oratory, but in street talk, ordinary tones, those easily parsed by the person she is speaking to. She offers this kind of mercy ... appearing and influencing in ways that are comprehensible to each individual in their own time, culture and place.

It is the simian ego who likes to anticipate visitations as high drama and with fantastical twists to all events, who can erase or garble the message. Our Lady, however, uses whatever works. She's not a "Say it once and never again" kind of mother. In the experience of many, she shows up over and over again, no matter what egos make of it.

How do I know? I know. As it was said in our family, no evidence needed for those who have felt her touch; not enough evidence in the cosmos to convince those who have not yet.

I know too from the literally thousands of authentic and heartfelt stories I've heard over these many decades from those souls ... men and women and children and old ones ... who have not only been touched by her once, but many times.

Experiences with Our Lady appear to carry at least one similar leitmotif: Her touch can be pragmatic in every way, but registers as a "sudden knowing," a sudden clarity, a sudden calming, a sudden inspiration, a sudden breaking of something that needed to be broken, a sudden pathway to mending something that ought to be mended, a sudden superior strength ... or "strength enough" to go on.

This sudden in-pouring of intelligence from Our Lady is completely out of the ordinary, yet useful, very often quite down-to-earth. Take this. Do this. Go here. Speak to so-and-so. Don't go. Stay over there. Listen to this person. See beneath the outer appearances.

Often enough, seeing, sensing, hearing Mary is a "No kidding, you've got to be kidding, you're really here?" experience, or else a quiet knowing, a drifting sense of being in the arms of a compassionate mother whose warm body is calming. There are other ways as well, perhaps most occurring under the "category" of a very loud or sweetly quiet "divine Aha!"

Thus, her sudden appearances, her voice made clear or even just barely comprehensible to us, urge us to listen daily, longer, harder, deeper ... her giving us signs to seal her truth with us. Her visits are not rare. They are common.

Whatever made minds think that a Mother of such magnitude would only appear just every now and then? What crabbed, narrow, deadly thought would deign that a devoted and loving mother would be stingy with her visitations to give guidance and knowings?

It is not true that rarity of appearance is more valuable. No loving mother follows such a dictum.

It is just the opposite.

Yet, some insist on wanting to verify or disprove appearances, advisories and miracles of Mary, Maria, Mir-yam in all her many manifestations. In various hierarchies, should any man, woman or child say aloud they travel with La Virgin on a regular basis, a group of assigned "judges" move in to "investigate," to "authenticate."

But, meanwhile Our Lady, Seat of Wisdom, pays no attention. She keeps appearing without any authority's permission, without any institutional sanction, to those in need. She bypasses all gatekeepers, appointed or self-appointed, and instead flies to intervene, lift spirits, direct, liberate souls throughout the world.

Undoubtedly, long ago, the "investigating and deposing" of ordinary people's experiences with Our Lady were initiated by those in love with the endless beauty of God. The churchmen wanted no chicanery with regard to the Sacred, or exploiting of naïve persons.

But, too often in times since, these valid concerns gradually seemed to turn to suspicious inquiry, then polarized, politicized pronouncements, becoming more strident over time about the utmost super-rare rarity of "real" visitations.

Thus, the church has built up a language of legalisms that attempts to "verify" such "alleged" visitations in order to "deliver a verdict." But, numinous experience, by definition, is non-quantifiable by ego tracking alone. Throughout the centuries, in Sor Juana's work, for instance, we see that visitations cry out to be described in the language of the soul who embraces the mystical nature of all.

We see this mark of the soul's language in the work from any soul who has sensed, conversed with Our Lady and her Precious Son, from little Saint Francis to the Little Flower, to Mechtild and to those thousands of writers whose work was never discovered by a reading public, to those millions of Marianas who could not read or write ...

Most often, the essence of what was seen and heard had to be recorded, not in ego words or by the "slice and dice" mind, but in poetry, music, dance, painting, sculpture, writing and other of the arts that have infinite layers and edges. These carry the deeper mysterious voice that can speak the language of numinous experience, a holy symbolic language. It is lyric language of color, movement, sound and lyric thought of the philosophorum kind that is needed to report the numinous.

Holy scriptures throughout the world don't devolve into poetics, they rise supreme on poetics, because that lyricism is the only language of the numinous experience that can come close to describing it with full grace, full glory, full gratitude.

Yet, the church's "investigation" of realness or inauthenticity, of others' experiences ... an inquiry that once was meant only to protect gullible others from Barnum Bailey Traveling Mary Shows for profit and ego fame ? has too often become intrusive, in effect poised to negate revelation entirely.

Certainly there has been over the millennia far too much effort put to negate or hide the fact that revelations and appearances by saints and the entire Holy Family, as well as the source without Source, are common to many, rather than to the chosen few.

When I was at university years ago, my grandmothers and aunts were my conciliares. Even though "uneducated," they were old believers and smart. When I learned something that might interest them, I would sit in the kitchen and tell all about it - and they would thoughtfully listen, and then thoroughly "correct it" for me, and tell me how it all really went together.

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When I told them about Vatican-appointed commissions that voted on the authenticity of private visitations and revelations by Blessed Mother, they listened carefully.

I told them the commission has three "rulings":

1. *constat de supernaturalitate* - The committee decides that an apparition, visitation, revelation or miracle displayed "all evidences," and therefore is an authentic intervention from heaven. (Some required "evidences" are that the person receiving the visitation/revelation be "of upright conduct, obedient to ecclesiastical authorities, able to return to normal practices of the faith," meaning communal worship, receiving sacraments, etc.) I am not even going to begin to describe the look on my old ones' faces on hearing the "evidences" required. As my aunt Kathé would say, Devotion doesn't mean dumbness.

2. *constat de non supernaturalitate* - The committee decides that an "alleged" experience is clearly not miraculous, and is found to have no supernatural basis. This last unfortunately and speciously implies that persons "claiming" visitation are either mentally ill or else possessed "by Satan." Such is stated in the 1978 "Norms of the Congregation for Proceeding in Judging Alleged Apparitions and Revelations," written by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and approved by Pope Paul VI - "nor may there be evidence of mental illness or psychopathic tendencies." I must say that it is a dicey proposition to imagine the good fathers performing far-reaching psychological analyses of various souls and declaring authenticity of appearance from there. I do not find anything saying Our Lady would pass by a person who struggles with a body chemistry that does not allow them to join society in the usual ways.

3. *non constat de supernaturalitate* - It is not evident whether or not the alleged apparition is authentic. In other words, to use trial lawyers' lingo, it is a "hung jury."

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After they listened quietly to this précis and consulted among themselves, my grandmother Katerin spoke for all. She averred that new visionaries and prophets were needed in each generation. She said they all agreed that visionaries and prophets were like geraniums. (My elders were peasant farmers from the old country.) As the plant grew sturdy new branches, the mother plant needed to be transferred into larger and larger containers so her roots could continue to grow deep and well.

The elders thought that by limiting who is and who is not sanctioned or sanctified enough to have experiences with Our Lady, the church had instead willfully transplanted Our Lady into increasingly smaller pots.

One of the "smallest containers" I can think of is the idea that she appears only to persons of "upright conduct," and so forth. And by inference, that Our Lady would never think to appear to a person who is disturbed/distressed in any way.

I say this last not as a plaint or a lament of those who carve Our Lady into such small deadened pieces, but as a charge and as an indictment.

Nuestra Madre, the Mother you know and I know, is not a relative idea, but rather our relative, our blood clan. She is in no way elitist. And in no way ought be diminished as such.

Again, from listening to thousands worldwide who have face-to-face relationships with her, it is clear she does not qualify or screen those she visits. She appears to every heart regardless of its owner's status, authority, dishevelment or saint potential.

In fact, Our Mother appears in striking ways and far more often to people like us who will never be saints, but who are Blessed Mother's dearest daughters and dearest sons, beloved inside her giant flower-perfumed heart forever.

It is clear that the souls she appears to most are often the very ones who need her most. I have met her many grateful witnesses: the lonely, all who have been abandoned - she reminds that she strands no one; the despairing - she reminds again and again that God and despair cannot exist in the same place at the same time.

She has reunited people and creatures who have lost each other. She visits those imprisoned, whether in a

rhetoric or whether in paper, golden or iron cages. She carries souls across the cold deserts of cultural pollutions and harming constraints; she infuses strength into the many who are threatened with physical and spiritual deaths; she is intercessor in their hardships - deceptions, thefts, the death cults of our times. She is a bringer of "the aerial viewpoint," seeing the greater picture as well as "what lies beneath."

She is drawn to those who have experienced any travail, any challenge, especially including those that she herself faced - to be believed, to be accepted, to be found worthy, to shelter the Truth and the Light.

This is why she is called La Nuestra Señora, because she is mother of all. No qualifiers, no proofs required.

She has been called Advisor, Helper, Intervener, Mediatrix. Yet, to reduce Our Lady to a mere coping mechanism, saying she has no rational function, grit or imagination, as some have ventured, is to say that Yahweh Jehovah must have just been a weekend hobbyist who took seven days off to make some "stuff."

La Madre, Nuestra Señora, Our Mother, continues regardless of those who say she did or did not appear to whomsoever; did or did not enter a house; did or did not lay hands on; did or did not heal; did or did not speak love to everything and everyone.

As vast intercessor, she is essential to tikkun olam, the Hebraic words meaning repair of the soul of the world. She is essential to the concept of ometeotl, the Nahuatl/Aztec word that means the one who enters the world from highest heaven to sweep clear the "two-way path" between the great earthly and heavenly hearts once again.

She has granted me relationship so many times. I fully admit: Her fingerprints are all over me. Perhaps they are all over you too. I hope so. Her palm prints are on my shoulders from trying to steer me in various proper and difficult directions - such as the path of a long and hard-won education for which I, as a welfare mother, had little means. Mi Guadalupe was there always during those "decades of nights" it took to earn degrees, and even more, to earn a place to live in a world that so shuns those not like the over-class. She whispered, "I crossed a long desert with little means, so can you."

I have the literal experience of the strength of her great arms holding me up when I thought I would die; her arms held me tight as I struggled to hold my fainting daughter up as she miscarried her beloved child. I have lain against Mi Madre's breasts sucking for strength to go on.

During a recent struggle with a misdiagnosis of terminal illness for which I was given but four months left to live, she took off her piscus of rayos and bid me to pass through her fiery corona, burning away my terror and grief time and again.

She has warmed me, and warned me in prescient ways, allowed me to put my hands inside her hands, responded forcefully to healing petitions for family members, friends and strangers.

She has answered petitions for recovery and abatement of threats, harms, wounds, luchas, struggles of many kinds. Answered in her way, not my way. And still I am terribly deficient ... and in all my failures, I find her dusty hem ever beside me, her voice saying, "Rise." Sometimes I think I was born in a semi-permanent bad mood, but near her, even though it's not easy most times, all I ever want to do is struggle to love, and then try to love some more.

Yet, as my drollest grandmother used to say, "Just think of how much worse we all would have turned out without her."

Perhaps most powerful of all, I pray to Our Lady daily with thousands of other old women throughout the world. I do not have all the answers, but I carry the essential conviction that Our Lady cannot resist listening to a gaggle of such comic, imperfect, devout and lively souls like us ... like you and me, regardless of our number of years on earth.

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I invite you to join our far-flung La Sociedad de La Señora de Guadalupe, our Society of devotion to Our Mother, Our Lady ... for she is on the side of life and she is for the world - all of it, not just some of it, not just those who have been "certified."

If you have a feel for her, if you desire a deeper guidance of more than the mundane kind, if you fear something precious will be lost or something dear will not come to fruition, if you have a healing hope for others who suffer, if you need a sign, guidance, a word of kindness, a drink of water on the long road ... please come join us in this invisible but palpable sodality. She is not called Ivory Tower and Tower of Light for nothing. Rise up, come forward, there is a Lady waiting, a Lady who knows you by name, and knows the way through and the ways forward by heart.

People often ask me how I pray to her. I've a thousand prayers I've been given by the desert and the dirt, by blood wrongly spilled, by counting the cavities in Death's back teeth, but the one prayer I return to with Our Lady time and again, for it is the one prayer given to me solely by her, is this one ... and I so deeply invite you to join me in our praying it together ... even though it is only one word long:

Enseñamé.

This means, *Please show me. Please teach me.*

I know Our Lady hears this prayer no matter from where throughout the universe is it released, for there is one thing God cannot do, that Our Lady cannot do ... that is, they cannot not love us.

Whatever we need to see, be shown, be inspired by ? the summons is the same:

Enseñamé.

Please show me. Please teach me.

Amen.

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Sometimes, when I am on tour, people ask about Blessed Mother figures on a tortilla, Blessed Mother rainbow on a glass building. I do not know that I can gauge all others' experiences. All I know is that Our Lady shows up in ways that have meaning to those who apprehend her. I note that media often ridicules or scorns such manifestations. But, I think one would have to speak to the people who find meaning there and see what they think firsthand, and weigh it not with a skeptic's heart, but with an open one. I sometimes paraphrase too what my own grandmothers said in words like these: "If the message is good, keep it close and work to understand it. If you sense it is not for goodness' sake, then discard it and travel onward. There are many stops on this rail line, many chances to see what can and must be seen, thought, understood."

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