

Transforming visions?

Apparitions of Mary

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Introduction: apparitions of Mary in medieval England and modern Europe¹

AT A TIME AROUND THE BEGINNING of the eighth century, a swineherd named Eoves or Eof experienced a vision of three women at a place that we now know as Evesham in Worcestershire, named after him. The woman in the centre was identified as the Virgin Mary, although anyone familiar with the ancient triple goddess in works by Robert Graves and others would probably suggest that this was a christianization of a pagan story. A Benedictine monk Ecgwin, bishop of Worcester, visiting the site, also had a vision of Mary there, and established the abbey which remained until the Reformation; it is now a much-visited ruin with several surviving medieval buildings.

The full story of Eoves and Ecgwin is peculiar to Evesham, but the underlying structure is a familiar one in Catholicism. The typical apparition is rooted in local traditions, traditions which stand at the interface between doctrinal Christianity and common religion with its folklore and belief in the spirit world.² The visionary is often someone located in the liminal (marginal) region between society and nature, usually a herder of animals at the edge of the village. If the apparition is to take its place in history, however, it has to receive the approval of the church hierarchy. This process of legitimization is also one in which the story sheds much of its common religion element, and becomes instead associated with the establishment of an official religious centre. As the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci noted, the Roman Catholic Church is very effective at integrating the popular and official in religious devotion.

Other important medieval apparition shrines in England were also linked to abbeys or priories: Thetford, in Norfolk, where visions were associated with healings and the building of a lady chapel at the already existing priory; Walsingham, also in Norfolk, where the dream vision led to the building of a 'holy house', said to duplicate that in Nazareth; Aylesford, in Kent, where the founder of the Carmelite priory, Simon Stock, was also credited with a vision of Mary. The twentieth century saw a strong resurgence of interest in pre-Reformation marian shrines

in England; Walsingham and Aylesford receive many visitors, while devotion at former abbey towns like Glastonbury, Guisborough, Doncaster and Evesham is now based in the local Roman Catholic parish churches.

The revival of marian pilgrimage in England in the twentieth century followed in the wake of marian revival in France in the nineteenth. The older French marian shrines, some of which, like Le Puy in Auvergne, had founding apparitions, were overshadowed by a new series of famous visions. Four were approved by the church hierarchy: Rue du Bac, Paris, 1830, with its famous 'miraculous medal'; La Salette in the Alps, 1846; Lourdes and its healing spring, 1858; the village of Pontmain in Normandy, 1871. There were, of course, many more, but the bishops promoted these four into the apparition 'canon'.

The growth of the canonical series of modern apparitions continued into the twentieth century in Europe, and four more were added: Knock, Ireland, 1879, but not authenticated until the 1930s; Fatima, Portugal, 1917; Beauraing and Banneux, Belgium, 1932–3. These have been the last of the series in Europe, although elsewhere in the world there has been some episcopal approval at shrines such as Akita, Japan; Betania, Venezuela; Kibeho, Rwanda.³ The attitude of the European hierarchy has not been conducive to the authentication of visions since World War II, and several pretenders to a place in the series – notably Garabandal, Spain, 1961–5; San Damiano, Italy, 1964–81; Medjugorje, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1981 – have been ignored or condemned by bishops, although there has been a relaxing of restrictions on pilgrimage and church liturgy at such places since the 1980s. These recent apparitions are in the La Salette-Fatima tradition of apocalyptic prophecy and secrets which inspire curiosity and anxiety.

The increase in pilgrimage to shrines old and new is no surprise in a tourism-loving society; while Guadalupe in Mexico remains the most-visited Catholic shrine in the world, Lourdes and now Medjugorje receive their millions. However, this heightened excitement over the internationally known shrines contrasts with the decline in interest in traditional marian devotions at the local level. Vatican II is often regarded as the cause of this trend: the tract on Mary was placed in the Constitution on the Church (*Lumen gentium*), rather than having a chapter to itself, excesses of the marian cult were condemned, and, to generalize, the new post-conciliar clergy are often indifferent to marian devotion. This local minimalism causes marian devotees to look away from home to find the spiritual energy and focus that they seek; traditional marian devotions are central at the apparition shrines, and

remain so today: the rosary, the Immaculate Heart, hymns like the *Salve Regina*, processions, and the feasts of the Assumption and Immaculate Conception. Like Lourdes and Fatima beforehand, Medjugorje has gained an international influence, spawning many 'Medjugorje centres', publications and groups in several countries. Many recent apparition messages, such as those in Ireland and the USA, clearly draw upon Medjugorje for the substance, emphasis and style.⁴

Apparition messages are quite varied depending on their origin, but there are four basic ingredients:

- the identification of the vision with Mary under a particular title;
- the request for a chapel, processions, traditional devotions like the rosary, prayer and liturgical observance;
- the promise of favours such as peace and healing conditional upon a return to right spirituality;
- the promise of miracles where the visionaries ask for proof of the reality of the apparition, which is unseen by others.

The social, psychological and ecclesiastical context of apparitions

Can a genuine and healthy Christian spirituality be discerned in apparition phenomena? The Catholic world is often divided on such issues, some accepting most reports that they hear with credulity, urging others to believe, while others debunk the phenomenon as pathological fanaticism, or a quaint relic of the pre-modern religious imagination. To start with, there are clearly many features of the visionary phenomenon so context-bound and partial that it is difficult to understand how they can be seen as evidence of a transcendent realm. However, it will become clear that there are also elements which display more profound characteristics.

The evidence suggests that apparitions are, first of all, popularized in times of social and political stress⁵ and, second, only approved by the church hierarchy if they occur when the atmosphere is right. This happens when the Church perceives itself under threat, and calculates that the enlistment of popular religious movements is in its strategic interests.⁶ The marian revival in France, 1830–1876, was one such period; Fatima was drawn into the Catholic struggle first against the Portuguese Republic, and then against international communism; Knock was not approved until the Irish Republic came into being. However, there is an attempt at objectivity through the use of clear criteria, of which the following are the most important:

- the orthodoxy of the messages and the activities of the ensuing cult;

- the absence of natural explanations, such as suggestive influences, hallucination, illusion, etc.;
- the character and comportment of the visionaries and followers (after the visions);
- the ‘spiritual fruits’, i.e. the devotion that arises in the wake of apparitions.⁷

Yet the application of these criteria is not always convincing. The fact that orthodoxy is the first criterion means that apparitions support the hierarchical Church rather than vice versa. This, unsurprisingly, can militate against truly prophetic visions ever being accepted into the mainstream. The Lourdes identification of the vision as the ‘Immaculate Conception’ followed papal definition of the dogma by four years. ‘Spiritual fruits’ often mean that emphasis is placed on the religious sphere of life: for example, return to mass and confession; social awareness, justice and peace are overlooked. Character and comportment tend to mean obedience, politeness, lack of scandal.

Furthermore, the apparition stories and messages cannot be accepted as pure unmediated events passed from visionary into the public sphere. Zimdars-Swartz and Apolito⁸ have shown in recent studies how the messages are edited and shaped by local people; the community creates its own version of the story, according to its influential members, and the original visionaries usually subscribe to this process. The process of making the event respectable has already begun before the church investigators arrive. Some visionaries saw an unspecified lady or girl in white and did not identify her as the Virgin Mary until encouraged to do so. Visions arise in conformity to local traditions about the miraculous, and are only secondarily co-opted into contemporary ecclesiastical and political concerns.

Zimdars-Swartz and Apolito have also shown how messages contribute to world-views that appeal to the interests of believers: a divine plan for the world involving Mary, redemptive suffering and an apocalyptic view of the near future.⁹ Life, mundane and rationalized, becomes re-enchanted. Those who perceive themselves to be marginalized achieve self-purpose, and find acceptance in the social world of pilgrimage and fervent prayer. God is present through Mary both as messenger and as saviour-mother. The anthropologist Charles Waddell showed how a marian shrine in Perth, Western Australia, transformed the life of a terminally ill patient by replacing the negative mental by-products of illness with positives: her sense of being diseased with spiritual health, her powerlessness with a contribution to Mary’s plan

through suffering and prayer, and her isolation with a lively membership of the pilgrim movement.¹⁰

Signs of the reality of the visionary experience

Of the four ecclesiastical criteria, the first two, i.e. orthodoxy and lack of natural explanation, are utilized in an attempt to ensure that there is no disqualifying factor. The latter two, i.e. the character of seers after the visions, and 'spiritual fruits', are more positive as they seek a transformation that has occurred: in the seers and their environment, and in the Church as a whole. Although the process for discerning apparitions of Mary can be seen to be heavily dependent on the situation in which the hierarchial Church finds itself, the underlying principle that a transformation must take place is a sound one. Without it the apparition, even if orthodox and free from natural explanations, means little. Yet a transformation does not have to be especially miraculous or unusual for the Catholic tradition to accept it as an instance of divine grace. Divine grace may be at work in a situation even with all the contextual factors taken into account: historical, sociological and psychological.

Rahner, in his *Visions and prophecies*, understood the transformation that would accompany a genuine apparition as deriving from a 'proper and original mystical phenomenon belonging to the realm of infused contemplation'. Visions are 'relatively unimportant compared with the infused contemplation from which they derive, and compared with faith, charity and the other supernatural Christian virtues . . .'¹¹ The sixteenth-century Carmelite mystics on whom Rahner drew – St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross – regarded an inner experience as more profound and reliable than an apparition which appeared to be an objective bodily presence outside the seer.¹² However, the realistic apparition seems to be necessary so that those seers untutored in the mystical life may apprehend the experience, and so that others may believe them. Catholicism is, after all, a tradition that relies on the visual in portraying its belief system.

The realistic apparition can be distinguished from, on the one hand, the ordinary realism of life, and on the other, from the inner subjectivity of the imagination. The experience is unlike everyday realism in that the apparition is usually visible only to certain persons, it (she) appears and disappears, hovers, ascends. This is in keeping with apparitions of the non-religious variety.¹³ However, apparitions of Mary are also distinct from the inner subjectivity of the imagination in that, very often, a whole group of persons is involved in the encounter, and they

seem to enter a trance state, as described by observers. The apparitions may continue over a period of months or years, sometimes at an appointed public place; this also serves to suggest their objectivity. While the apparition is, in the official teaching of the Church, a 'private revelation', the communal impact of many cases is reinforced by these signs of realism.

*Transformation at Lourdes*¹⁴

Despite the fact that divine grace may be discerned in an apparition when it meets hopes and needs, and even when it is rooted in the temporal social context of a church community, obvious partiality in apparition messages will not convince people beyond a limited circle. On the one hand, if a movement that argues for, say, the declaration of Mary as co-redemptrix, then claims visions that support their cause, this will be treated with suspicion; on the other, if an apparition movement claims that Mary is angry about abortion, then the answer will be that this already reflects the Church's teaching – what does the apparition therefore teach us? It is likely that something over and above what people already know and feel, at least on the surface, is necessary for belief that a transformation has taken place.

This something 'over and above' must suggest the presence of the inner contemplative encounter with God on which Rahner insists for an apparition to be a truly spiritual experience. It will correspond perhaps to the inner prompting of an unwelcome conscience, it must be subtle and challenging, it must change hearts and minds rather than reaffirm strongly held views. The apparition movement is, on the whole, conservative in Catholic terms, and claims that what reaffirms its own beliefs – e.g. that regular mass and confession is important, the pope has absolute authority, and the Church's teaching on morals must be upheld – represents a potential revelation and transformation for others who need to hear the message. Yet this, of course, will not convince those who are fundamentally opposed to such views. Are the apparitions, then, a lost cause for the radical Catholic who seeks a greater attention to the individual conscience, to social justice, and to everyday experience?

Of all the shrines, Lourdes is perhaps the most popular to the non-conservative. Its appeal extends beyond the Catholic world, it is not entangled in fearful apocalyptic messages, and its pilgrimages encourage a sense of community and respect for the disabled. Indeed, the theme of transformation can easily be discovered in the story of Lourdes. In 1858, Bernadette Soubirous was the sickly, poverty-ridden

and theologically ignorant teenager whose visions, enhanced by her compelling trance state, allowed her to express her latent spirituality and gain the adulation of the town in which she had been marginal. The grotto itself, a spooky and dirty place where pigs were grazed and infested rags were dumped, became the centre of an international healing cult. Healing was not mentioned in the spoken messages at Lourdes, yet the spring that the apparition directed Bernadette to find was a natural symbol that ensured the future of Lourdes as a healing shrine. Yet healing is not only associated with physical amelioration and, indeed, most claims at Lourdes are of spiritual healing. Those marginalized through illness are at the centre of the Lourdes cultus; their suffering bestows on them an almost saintly status, and they are likened to the suffering Christ.¹⁵ Thus the message of Lourdes is like the Cinderella story: the transformation of the marginal so that it becomes the centre.

This 'meaning' of Lourdes has outlasted other attempts to give the shrine its locus in history. In the France of the 1870s, Lourdes was at the centre of the Catholic movement for national repentance after defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. This movement was conservative and monarchist, and drew great pilgrimage crowds to Lourdes and La Salette. The Assumptionists who ran Lourdes were leaders of this movement, and were finally banished by the Republic in 1900.¹⁶ The argument between Catholic monarchism and the Republic had lasted until then, but dissolved completely with the uniting of the nation in the First World War. The Lourdes emphasis on healing and a non-political stance was in the ascendant long before this, and easily survived the end of the monarchist dream. Moves to close down the shrine in 1900 were blocked by local republicans rather than conservatives: their livelihood was at stake!

*The challenge to Medjugorje*¹⁷

The shrine at Medjugorje may seem at first sight to fail the criterion of transformation. In the 1980s, Gerry Hughes remarked on the lack of concern for peace among its pilgrims.¹⁸ In the 1990s, during the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, there were many examples of its devotees displaying (or supporting) fervent Croat nationalism and indifference to the plight of those regarded as enemies, the starving Muslims of East Mostar, for example. At the height of the war, Medjugorje publications referred to Muslims generally as 'fundamentalists', and there was scarcely any recognition of Croatian responsibility for atrocities and aggression. One well-known Medjugorje Franciscan has recently

applauded those convicted of war crimes, referring to their 'defence of their homeland'.¹⁹

Yet all of this was in stark contrast to the early messages at Medjugorje. The visionaries reported that Mary was to be called the 'Kraljice Mira', Queen of Peace, a title already known in Catholicism, and added to the Litany of Loreto during the First World War by Benedict XV. When the visions began in 1981, ten years before the outbreak of the civil war, the apparition pleaded for peace in tears at the foot of the cross. Her messages emphasized the importance of tolerance for people of other faiths and nationalities. It was reported that, when asked for the name of the most virtuous resident in the parish, she identified a Muslim. The later messages have not sustained the early radical edge, however.

Those who champion Medjugorje claim transformation on the grounds of increased religious fervour, pilgrimage, prayer, etc. One of the most persistent themes of the messages was the transformation of hearts. Some even claim that Medjugorje was miraculously saved from destruction during the war – a naïve claim, given that the area was predominantly Croat and not strategically important, and the home of UN troops for part of the period. Even if Medjugorje was somehow shielded from the ravages of war, it was not saved from the blind patriotism that accompanies it. However, a possible link between Medjugorje and the gospel story is the association with the Marcan theme of the misunderstanding and lack of commitment of Jesus' disciples. A substantial number of Medjugorje's followers betrayed the tears of the Queen of Peace in not heeding her call to tolerance, respect and love that demands a willingness to lay down one's patriotism and overcome the instinctive fear of the other. Admittedly, this call would have been very difficult to follow in the circumstances of civil war, no less than that of staying with Jesus as the soldiers entered Gethsemane.

If one is to judge the messages of Medjugorje, it would not be their orthodoxy or the transformation of their followers that might finally convince one that there has been a genuine experience of Mary or Christ there. It would be that they have challenged the hearers quite radically; they do not simply affirm the aspirations of their followers, but arise from that deep God-given awareness that one has to seek reconciliation with one's enemies, and accept responsibility for their welfare. Both Angela Tilby and E. Michael Jones²⁰ have drawn attention to the possible link between these apparitions and the terrible history of the area during the Second World War, claiming that the visionaries may be sensitive to a communal guilt for atrocities

committed against the Serbs. This guilt may lead to fear and entrenchment, or to repentance and overtures for peace: the evidence suggests that, with the threats suffered in war, the trend for many was to the former response, but that the main impetus of the early apparition messages strongly encouraged the latter.

While the feature of the gospel story emphasized at Lourdes is the transformation of the community to privilege the previously marginal and those disadvantaged because of sickness, another can be discerned for Medjugorje: the gap that exists between the acceptance of the messenger and the full living out of the message. Mark's Gospel, in particular, throws this into relief: Jesus is the one whose messianic status is acknowledged but its implications not grasped, the one who receives pledges of support, but is abandoned to his passion. In other words, a true mark of the gospel message is that it comes as a challenge to those who accept it; it transcends the self-interest of its disciples, and calls them to lay down their lives in order to save them. Thus the characteristic of the messages of the Queen of Peace that suggest them as a genuine manifestation of Christian spirituality is, paradoxically, the inability of their closest followers to measure up to them.

Conclusion: from margin to centre

The apparition stories over the centuries stress the liminal: as we have seen, Eoves of Evesham and Bernadette of Lourdes were marginal figures, Eoves as a herder of swine, and Bernadette because of her poverty, asthmatic condition (due to cholera) and backwardness in education. It is instructive that Bernadette's temporary job as a shepherdess (in which she was not engaged at the time of the visions) has been emphasized in some iconography at Lourdes. Shepherds, standing alone in the wild, are the most typical of all liminal figures, from the Gospel of Luke to medieval visions. It is at the margin, according to these stories, that God is encountered; they therefore have a radical potential, suggesting the overturning of the normal primacy of the urban, the clerical, the wealthy. The margin becomes the centre: this message is at the heart of the transformation that Lourdes represents. It may, of course, be interpreted in a sentimental rather than liberating way. It is also true that the margin loses its claim to be marginal when it is made the centre: Lourdes is now the most respectable of shrines! Cinderella cannot remain Cinderella when she becomes the princess. Nevertheless, the story may function in a paradigmatic way, reminding the hearer of the importance of respecting the marginalized.

How does Medjugorje fit into this pattern of liminality/marginality? First, the parish itself is in the borderlands, being predominantly Croat in the multicultural Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is close to Mostar, which after Sarajevo was the most divided town during the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. At the beginning of the visions, Medjugorje's Catholics saw themselves in opposition to a Communist government, both at the republic and federal levels. The Franciscan priest of the parish was arrested for preaching sedition (although claiming to be speaking symbolically about the apparitions), and jailed for eighteen months.

It could be said that Medjugorje became marginal ecclesiastically, with the growing opposition of the diocesan bishop, but the support of so many Catholics, from lay people to archbishops, in Croatia and abroad, rather refutes that suggestion. Indeed, Medjugorje, like Lourdes, has overcome its opposition: the Communists banished; the hostile local bishop overruled by the tolerant policy of the national conference of bishops under international pressure; the civil war seemingly ended. However, Medjugorje remains at the margins because of its location; it is in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the one republic in Europe which represents the meeting point of three cultures and faiths in a delicate balance of populations. It is here as much as anywhere else in Europe that the message of the 'Kraljice Mira', Queen of Peace, is needed.

There is a radical undercurrent to some of the best-known apparitions of Mary which might make sense to those who do not feel called to the sensationalism of the miraculous, nor to a blind return to traditionalism without an integration of religion and justice, nor to an expectation of apocalyptic secrets and a literalistic understanding of divine reward and punishment. It is a thread that draws together Lourdes and its grotto; Fatima, where peace was promised in a village with a Muslim name; Banneux in Belgium, where, in the same month that Hitler came to power, the vision called herself the 'Virgin of the Poor', and revealed a spring declaring that it was 'reserved for all nations to relieve the sick'.

Medjugorje carries that same message of peace and healing beneath the hype. In 1981, it was a place of terrible memories in a country that would see more atrocities, a place of guilt over past sins and anxious expectation after the death of Tito, who had held Yugoslavia together. It is an instance, not of that social transformation that goes beyond the devotional and personal, but of the profound tragedy of Christianity, in that the most fervent are often the least able to hear the message of the

gospel. In that sense alone it is a genuine manifestation of the Christian charism, which in each generation hears anew the radical call to lose one's life and thereby gain it.

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NOTES

1 A fuller treatment of modern apparitions of Mary and a bibliography are given in my unpublished thesis: Chris Maunder, 'Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in modern European Roman Catholicism (from 1830)' (University of Leeds, 1991).

2 See e.g. William A. Christian, *Apparitions in late medieval and Renaissance Spain* (Princeton University Press, 1981); Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: body and spirit in the secular age* (Allen Lane/Penguin, London, 1999).

3 René Laurentin has catalogued modern marian apparitions worldwide in *The apparitions of the Virgin Mary today*, trans Luke Griffin, 2nd edn (Veritas, Dublin, 1991).

4 For the USA, see the version recounted by E. Michael Jones, *The Medjugorje deception: Queen of Peace, ethnic cleansing, ruined lives* (Fidelity Press, South Bend, 1998); and for Ireland, see Chris Maunder, 'Apparitions in late-twentieth-century Ireland: visions and reflections', *Maria* vol 1 (2000), pp 69–85.

5 See recent important studies on apparitions, e.g. David Blackburn, *Marpingen: apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Bismarckian Germany* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993); William A. Christian Jr, *Visionaries: the Spanish Republic and the reign of Christ* (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1996); also the work of Victor and Edith Turner – from whom comes the concept of the 'liminal' – on marian shrines and apparitions: *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture: anthropological perspectives* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1978). Chapter 6, 'Postindustrial marian pilgrimage' (pp 203–230) is reproduced in James J. Preston (ed), *Mother worship* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1982), pp 145–173.

6 Maunder, 'Apparitions of the Virgin Mary', chronicles the process of the ecclesiastical approval of apparitions in modern Europe.

7 René Laurentin reveals recent Vatican policy on the criteria in 'The Church and apparitions', *Mir* (Manchester Medjugorje Centre), five parts in nos 15–19 (1990), pp 17–23, 27–33, 20–24, 22–27, 19–24.

8 Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: from La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Paolo Apolito, *The apparitions of the Madonna at Oliveto Citra: local visions and cosmic drama*, trans William A. Christian Jr (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).

9 Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, pp 245–270; Apolito, *Oliveto Citra*, pp 133–202.

10 Charles Waddell, 'Marian devotions: magic, human foibles and Catholic worship' (unpublished paper, University of Western Australia, Perth, 1999).

- 11 Karl Rahner, *Visions and prophecies (Quaestiones Disputatae no 10)*, trans C. Henkey and R. Strachan (Herder & Herder, New York, 1963), pp 79–80.
- 12 Teresa de Jesus, *Complete works* vol 1, trans and ed E. A. Peers (Sheed & Ward, London, 1963); John of the Cross, *The complete works* vol 1, trans S. de Santa Teresa, ed E. A. Peers (Burns, Oates & Washbourne, London, 1934).
- 13 See Celia Green and Charles McCreery, *Apparitions* (Institute of Psychophysical Research, Oxford, 1989).
- 14 For Lourdes, there is a vast body of literature, but see e.g. Harris, *Lourdes*; René Laurentin, *Lourdes: histoire authentique*, 6 vols (P. Lethielleux, Paris, 1961–4); Thomas A. Kselman, *Miracles and prophecies in nineteenth-century France* (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, 1983).
- 15 See Andrea Dahlberg, 'The body as a principle of holism: three pilgrimages to Lourdes' in John Eade and Michael J. Sallnow (eds), *Contesting the sacred: the anthropology of Christian pilgrimage* (Routledge, London and New York, 1991), pp 51–76.
- 16 See Barbara Corrado Pope, 'Immaculate and powerful: the marian revival in the nineteenth century' in C. W. Atkinson, C. H. Buchanan and M. R. Miles (eds), *Immaculate and powerful: the female in sacred image and social reality* (Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 1985), pp 173–200.
- 17 For Medjugorje, there is also a wealth of publications, but see e.g. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary*, pp 233–244; René Laurentin and Ljudevit Rupčić, *Is the Virgin Mary appearing at Medjugorje?* (Word Among Us, Washington, DC, 1984); Michael O'Carroll, *Medjugorje: facts, documents, theology* (Veritas, Dublin, 1986).
- 18 Gerard W. Hughes, 'Walking to Jerusalem 5: a taste of peace', *The Tablet* (20 June 1987), pp 655–656.
- 19 A perusal of issues of the periodical *Mir* (Manchester Medjugorje Centre) during the Bosnian civil war illustrates my point. There was also the Bernard Ellis controversy, in which money meant for refugees was used for Croat arms (see e.g. Jones, *Medjugorje deception*, p 247, on this). In 1993, mainstream television news channels reported the stopping in Medjugorje of a food convoy bound for the Muslims under siege in East Mostar. More recently, a report of a talk defending Croats convicted of war crimes was quoted in the *Mir Newsheet* no 005 (June 2000).
- 20 Angela Tilby, 'Why the need for signs and wonders?', *The Way* vol 30, no 4 (1990), pp 279–287; Jones, *Medjugorje deception*, pp xi–xxi.