



CATHOLICISM'S GREATEST MODERN PROOF

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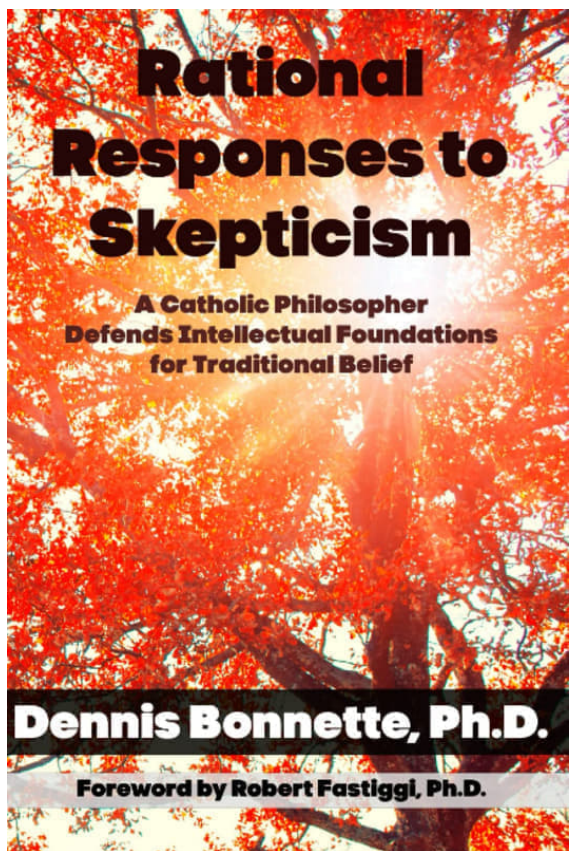


The following article is excerpted from my book, *Rational Responses to Skepticism* (En Route Books, 2022), 527-542. It shows with objective certainty that true miracles occurred at Fatima, Portugal, on 13 October 1917—events caused by God alone, the Creator of the universe—and could not have been caused by man, space aliens, or demons. Moreover, since the heavenly person appearing to the children whom God chose as recipients of the Fatima message called herself “the lady of the Rosary,” the uniquely Catholic nature of this authentic divine revelation is proven. *Not even Eastern Orthodox Christians have the Rosary.*

In no way do I intend to denigrate the fine work of Christian and Catholic apologists, who offer overwhelming evidence in support of divine revelation occurring in and through the person of the Lord of History, Jesus Christ.

While the greatest miracle of all time is the Resurrection of Christ, the unfortunate fact for many people today is that that event, which took place some two millennia ago, requires careful historical research in order for them to be convinced of its reality. But, we live in an age of high technology, where even the least newsworthy incidents get recorded for broadcast on the evening news in a clip from some bystander's cellphone. This makes it difficult for many to be convinced of an event that took place long before today's “eyewitness” proof of a cellphone video.

Fortunately, for contemporary man, God has deigned to give us a modern miracle that offers undeniable proof of its authenticity and divine origin in terms designed to disarm present-day skeptics. *It is set in a time so recent that modern means of electronic communication, photography, and newspapers existed, but not so recent that GCI or other high tech fakery was yet developed.*



The whole world knows that, on 25 March 2022, Pope Francis publically consecrated Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary—thus manifesting Catholicism's intimate connection to events that took place at Fatima, Portugal in 1917.

The Fatima story is well known—even to many unbelievers. Indeed, movies have been made about it, including *The Miracle of Our Lady of Fatima* (1952) and *Fatima* (2020). For those who know nothing of it, the story begins in May of 1917, when Pope Benedict XV made a direct appeal to the Blessed Virgin to end WWI. Just over a week later, three children, tending their flock of sheep in Fatima, Portugal, suddenly saw a lady bathed in light, who told them not to fear and that she came from heaven. She asked them to return on the 13th of each month at the same hour for the next six months. The lady also asked them to pray the Rosary, which the children began doing fully each day thereafter.

Over time, others joined the children at the appointed time each month and, by July, numbered two or three thousand people. During the September 13th visit, the lady promised that in October she would

tell the children who she was and would perform a miracle "so that all may believe." The apparitions occurred each month on the 13th, except for August, when the anti-religious authorities seized the children and threatened them with death, thereby preventing them from attending the scheduled apparition. By 13 October 1917, predictions of a public miracle had become so widely known that literally tens of thousands of people, believers and skeptics alike, converged on Fatima from all directions.

The Miracles of Fatima

The message of Fatima, which led to the 25 March 2022 consecration of Ukraine and Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Pope Francis and all the bishops, is not my primary concern in this essay. Rather, my intent is to show that the miraculous events at Fatima could have been effected solely through the power of the God of classical theism and that they prove with certitude the authenticity of Catholic religious revelation.

While many focus on visual aspects of the "sun dancing in the sky" on that day, I shall examine three diverse phenomena, any one of which might be considered a contender for the category of a miracle: (1) the prediction, (2) the solar observations, and (3) the sudden drying of the people's clothes and of the ground. We should remember that the term, "miracle," means, "by God alone." A true miracle is an event, outside the order of nature, that nothing less than the Infinite Being, who is the God of classical theism, can cause. No lesser phenomena meet the qualification for the term.

The oldest child, Lucia, tells us that the lady who appeared to them on 13 October 1917 said, "I am the Lady of the Rosary." In all six apparitions, the lady told the children and the world to pray the Rosary. This confirms the specifically Catholic nature of this private revelation. *If any genuine miracles took place that day, they confirm the truth of the Catholic religion.*

1. The Prediction Miracle

The tens of thousands of witnesses appearing from all over Portugal show, without doubt, that the prodigies which occurred at Fatima on 13 October 1917 were the result of a clear prediction. This is evinced by the very fact that such a multitude expected some sign from heaven that many traveled even large distances to Fatima to witness the events. *The miraculous phenomena were predicted as to*

date, hour, and location—by three children, the oldest of whom was just ten. And the prediction was stunningly fulfilled.

Some have claimed that spiritualists predicted ahead of time that something amazing and good for humanity would happen on 13 May 1917, which turned out to be the day of the first vision at Fatima. Since Catholicism condemns such superstitious and possibly demonic practices as spiritualism, it has been argued that this might suggest the whole Fatima story is the work of the devil or even space aliens.

We must recall that the children reported the appearance of an angel who gave them Holy Communion in 1916. If that is true, then demonic estimates of future events could have been triggered, making the nature and date of a subsequent contact from heaven well within the paranormal powers of demons. After all, just by doing merely human software data mining, Clif High has made some amazing predictions of future events. The preternatural powers of demons should far exceed such human abilities.

While Catholicism condemns spiritualism, this does not mean that authentic information could not be given by demons to certain spiritualists. There is no need for space aliens to explain these spiritualist predictions, even assuming they are true.

In any event, the very public nature of the children's predictions of a miracle, "so that all may believe," was widely known before the fact and stunningly fulfilled in a manner and scope unique in human history. Since I shall show later that the miracle of the sun itself could not have been produced either by space aliens or demons, the only adequate cause of this uniquely exact prediction of such a massive miracle must solely have been the God of classical theism.

2. The Visual Solar Miracle

The number of people—skeptics as well as believers—who gathered at the Cova da Iria at Fatima, Portugal, on 13 October 1917 is estimated to range from 30,000 to as high as 100,000. While many books and articles have been published about Fatima, of special interest is a small work by John M. Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses of the Miracle of the Sun* (1961). He took depositions from some 200 persons, thereby offering us eyewitness testimony some four decades after the miracle, but still within the

lifetime of many witnesses. This book contains detailed eyewitness recounting of events by over thirty persons.

The book summarizes seven significant facts widely documented. They include that (1) the time, date, and place of the miracle was predicted in advance, (2) an extraordinary light that could be seen for many miles sending out "shafts of colored light" that tinted ground objects, (3) what looked like a great ball of fire fell toward earth, causing tens of thousands to think it was the end of the world, (4) the prodigy stopped just before reaching earth and returned to the sky, (5) it left and returned to the place of the sun, so that viewers thought it was the sun, (6) the mountain top where this happened had been drenched with rain for hours, but was completely dried in minutes, and (7) tens of thousands witnessed these events over an area of six hundred square miles (Haffert, 15).

Some online sources also give detailed eyewitness accounts.

It was quickly pointed out by skeptics that no such solar behavior could have actually occurred, since no observatory detected it and, following the rules of physics, such actual solar movements would have caused mass destruction on planet Earth!

Although the vast majority of witnesses reported seeing something they took to be the sun performing roughly similar amazing movements—even though some observers were miles away from the Cova da Iria, it should be noted that *multiple sources report that some people at the Cova said that they saw nothing unusual at all.*

The fact that the people saw amazing solar displays and even frightening movements of a silver-pearl disc that began its movements from the actual location of the sun—while the real sun could not have actually been so moved in space, demonstrates that massive visions were being experienced by tens of thousands of people simultaneously. This is reinforced by the reports that "...others, including some believers, saw nothing at all." Certainly, any real extramental visual phenomena—even if they were not from the real sun itself—would have been seen, not just by some, but by all present.

While it is possible that some visual phenomena that day may have followed the normal laws of nature, what is clear is that the most extraordinary Fatima visual phenomena appear to have been in the nature of visions—possibly even "individually adjusted" to fit the sometimes diverse experiences of different observers.

Since the “solar” phenomena were not all reported to be the same and since not all present even appear to have seen it at all, it must be that whatever took place was *not extramentally real* as visually apprehended. Rather, it is evident that the phenomena was seen as extramental, but must have been caused by some agent able to produce internal changes in the observers, such that they believed they were witnessing actual external events. One writer calls it a “miracle of perception.”

Also, purely physical explanations based on some sort of optical phenomena fail to account for the overwhelming fear induced by seeing the “sun” appear to be about to crash into the earth, causing many to fall to their knees in the mud and some to actually call out their grievous sins for all to hear, since there were no priests available!

What critics badly miss is that variances in accounts actually strengthen the case for a miracle, not weaken it. Such a rich diversity of reports supports the case for all the visual aspects being “miracles of perception” that differ in each person. Like the fact that *some were said to see nothing at all*, this would support the claim that no external physical changes actually took place in the “dance of the sun.” Rather, this must be a case of massive individual “visions”—making the case for an extra-natural explanation only greater.

The plain fact is that tens of thousands of people do not make up a “collective lie,” especially when they cannot even get their story quite straight. Moreover, the plain fact is that the vast majority of those tens of thousands of people experienced analogously similar extraordinary behavior by the sun or by a silvery disc that emanated from the sun. Tens of thousands of people do not have collective hallucinations or anxiety attacks—especially, when the sea of humanity present included believers and non-believers, Catholics and atheists, secular government officials and skeptics alike.

However one explains one of most massively eyewitnessed events in recorded history, it must be accepted that the vast majority of those present experienced what surely looked like the greatest public miracle in history—even as reported in the atheistic secular newspapers in Lisbon, including *O Seculo*, whose 15 October 1917 edition published a front page headline, reading, “Como O Sol Bailou Ao Meio Dia Em Fatima,” that is, “How the sun danced at noon in Fatima.”

Could such massive phenomena have been caused by natural agents, space aliens, or even demons? Physicist and theologian, Stanley Jaki, O.S.B., offers an explanation based on the natural formation of an “air lens” at the site of the solar phenomena. But his explanation immediately confronts multiple

difficulties. Even looking directly at the sun through an air lens would damage the eye, and no reports of ocular damage were recorded after the event. Moreover, I have already pointed out that the existence of somewhat conflicting descriptions of the phenomena as well as the fact that some saw nothing unusual at all, prove that the solar experiences must have been internal visions of externally experienced events—not the result of Jaki's air lens hypothesis.

Finally, Jaki claims that the heating effect of the lens could have dried the people's clothes and the wet ground. Unfortunately, while this may work in theory, *the amount of energy needed to produce such rapid drying in a natural manner would have simply incinerated everyone involved!* Instead, the people only felt comfortably dry. Jaki's hypothesis appears to be simply false.

This "drying" miracle alone so contravenes the laws of nature that neither space aliens nor even demons could have produced it.

Natural agency of the visual "sun miracle" is ruled out because the phenomena were not external—as I have just shown, but rather, these were visions caused by internal changes in the witnesses. While space aliens might have mastered the technology of holograms, so as to produce some external physical display, that does not explain the number of witnesses who clearly saw nothing abnormal at all. The effects had to be internal and *individualized* in order to explain variances in what was seen, and especially, *what was totally not seen by a number of people*. Thus, the effects were not produced by visiting space aliens. Indeed, they were at least preternatural, if not, supernatural in nature.

On the dubious hypothesis that these effects were preternatural, and not supernatural, could they have been produced by angels or demons? Here, a moral analysis suffices.

If somehow done by angels, then they were at the direction of God anyway. But, if done by demons, one is confronted with a message to humans to stop sinning, repent, and pray. I don't think any further proof is needed to show that demons did not do this.

Finally, while preternatural effects are accomplished by producing a natural effect in an unnatural way, such as a body levitating with nothing seen to be lifting it, these optical phenomena entailed changing the internal vision experiences of tens of thousands of persons simultaneously. Whether merely preternatural powers could produce such an effect is highly debatable. In any event, the previously-

given demonstrations show clearly that the “dance of the sun” at Fatima could have been produced solely through the infinite power of the God of classical theism, since it clearly exceeds the power of either man or space aliens to produce such individualized internal perceptions and moral analysis excludes the agency of spiritual agents other than, possibly, those following God’s command.

3. The Sudden Drying of Everything

Some critics, who were not themselves eye witnesses, try to explain away aspects of what happened at Fatima that day over a century ago by saying that, while certain things were physically real, they were not all that abnormal and were merely over-interpreted by those present.

The problem with such explanations is that they simply do not fit the actual experiences of those present at the time. For example, facile explanations of the sun’s behavior as being merely natural phenomena fail to note the reactions of those who fell to their knees in the mud, thinking it was the end of the world, or of those persons who cried out their personal sins before everyone, since there were no priests present!

A peer-reviewed article suggests that biological mechanisms can produce subjective visual phenomena similar to those reported at Fatima. See [“Apparitions and Miracles of the Sun”](#) by Auguste Meessen. Meessen directly looked at the sun on two occasions. The first time he experienced as “the initial phase of a typical ‘miracle of the sun’ in which “the sun immediately converted into a grey disc.” The second time he saw “impressive colours,” multiple expansions of the sun, and the sky becoming more luminous.

Yet, if this phenomenon is so easily reproduced, why hasn’t it been reported countless times and part of conventional science? Meessen lists some dozen instances of “sun miracles”—all *within* religious contexts. He mentions some similar instances lacking “apparitional context,” but fails to give sources. It really seems that so easily-duplicated natural phenomena would be widely known—**and this especially so, were the phenomena anything like the astounding, crowd-terrifying ones experienced by many thousands of eyewitnesses at Fatima.** Why hasn’t the same frightening solar experience happened to a stadium full of football fans some time—or, many times -- in the past? *Instead, medical science warns us strictly not to look directly at the sun to avoid retinal damage!* Possibly, some mechanisms such as Meessen describes do exist, but God transformed the Fatima phenomena so radically that observers thought they were about to die and the world was about to end!

Even if Meessen were correct in projecting observed mechanisms so as to explain all of the astounding Fatima solar phenomena, that would still not refute the demonstrated miraculous nature of (1) the predictions of the exact time and place that the visual solar phenomena would take place and (2) the sudden drying of clothing and land that accompanied the predicted event—effects producible by God alone: miracles.

For hours before the sun miracle it was raining and soaking both ground and those present—as evinced by the sea of umbrellas seen in some photos. Suddenly, the clouds withdrew and the various shocking movements seen by the people as being from the sun took place. As the brilliant silvery disc finally drew back to the original position of the sun, many suddenly noticed that they, their clothes, and the ground were completely dry.

Later critics challenge this interpretation of events. They claim that photos do not appear to show so much water or that evaporation may have taken place as the sun bathed them for some ten minutes of its “dance” or that not all reported this alleged “miracle.”

But the critics were not there. First, there are photos of a sea of large umbrellas, covering the entire crowd at one point. Further, many witnesses affirm the essential facts: the initial soaking rain followed by sudden and complete drying. For one example, Dominic Reis of Holyoake, Massachusetts, in a television interview, made these selected remarks: “And now it was raining harder.” “Yes, three inches of water on the ground. I was soaking wet” (Haffert, *Meet the Witnesses*, 7). After the sun miracle occurs, he continues: “...the wind started to blow real hard, but the trees didn’t move at all. ... in a few minutes the ground was as dry as this floor here. Even our clothes had dried.” “The clothes were dry and looked as though they had just come from the laundry” (Ibid., 11). Many other witnesses make similar statements: “I was all wet, and afterward my clothes were quite dry” (Ibid., 69). Understandably, some remembered nothing about the drying: “I was so distracted that I remember nothing but the falling sun. I cannot even remember whether I took the sheep home, whether I ran, or what I did” (Ibid., 41).

Given that the people attest to the truth of the ground and themselves being very wet, and yet, completely dry in the space of a few minutes, it is evident that some force beyond normal physics obtained here. It is possible to dry objects that quickly, but *so intense a heat would doubtless kill the people in the process.* This extra-natural character of this sudden drying exceeds the natural physical laws, which limit both the ability of space aliens and even the preternatural powers of demons.

This third miracle of Fatima—the sudden drying—is uniquely important, since it provided a more lasting and *evident physical corroboration* of events that the witnesses might otherwise think was simply a brief visual experience. Once again, we see a true miracle, something that could be effected solely by the God of classical theism.

Findings

Fatima's miracles are unique in history because of the immense number of witnesses combined with three distinct simultaneous events that meet the definition of the miraculous, that is, something that solely the God of classical theism could effect. Nor can be ignored the intimate connection between these public miracles and a message from heaven that is clearly and intimately intertwined with the presence of "the lady of the Rosary," who asks for the consecration of Russia to her Immaculate Heart. The Rosary appeared in Catholicism after the Eastern Orthodox split from Rome. *The miracle of Fatima is clearly a divine approbation of the Catholic religion.*

This unique historical event demonstrates divine approval of Christian revelation in general and of Catholicism specifically. Moreover, it confirms the divine message given to the visionaries, concerning the need for prayer and repentance and even of a special instruction of what would be necessary for God to give the blessing of the conversion of Russia and world peace.

The whole point of this article so far has been to establish two basic and unchangeable truths: (1) that the God of classical theism can be known to exist with certitude through the use of unaided natural reason, and (2) that Christianity in its specifically Catholic form can be shown with objective certitude to be the authentic revelation of the God of classical theism.

No future discoveries or revelations can alter or diminish these two fundamental truths that undergird human existence on this planet.

UFOs and Space Aliens

Now we come to the much delayed and truly fascinating part of this article. What about the UFOs and space aliens? Do they really exist as extraterrestrial biological intelligent beings or as non-bodily intelligences? I hate to let the reader down, but I intend to suspend judgment on most of this intriguing

topic for the simple reason that the truth about space aliens is not yet publicly acknowledged one way or the other.

There are those who claim that the military knows that extraterrestrials from other planets exist, but that they hesitate to inform the public for fear of its reaction to the news.

On the other hand, there is talk about something like Project Blue Beam existing. This would entail a false space invasion being foisted on an unsuspecting public. The means would be based on use of new-technology holograms, which are so convincing that people would think that they are seeing the Second Coming appearing the heavens or, alternatively, a fleet of spacecraft hovering over us and prepared to wipe out humanity.

The latter space threat could be used to intimidate all mankind into submission to a one world government in order to meet this alleged "threat." This new global government would then turn out to be part of the Great Reset, which aims to impose tyranny on the entire human race, combined with a program of depopulation.

We need not entertain all these speculative and controversial claims and theories in order to point out something basic that is true regardless of what we finally may discover about extraterrestrials, namely, that *nothing we discover can undo the eternal truths already known with certitude through unaided natural reason or infallible divine revelation.*

We already know that the God of classical theism eternally exists and that Christian revelation in its Catholic expression is the authentic revelation of God.

Do extraterrestrials exist? Of course, they do! We know this, because it is part of Christian revelation. But these "extraterrestrial" creatures are pure spirits, directly created by God in the form of the angels. Those who fell from grace, we call devils or demons.

What we usually mean, when we ask if extraterrestrials exist, is, "Do intelligent bodily creatures originating from other planets in the cosmos exist? Or, perhaps, do such creatures exist in interdimensional physical reality (whatever exactly that may mean!)? In either event, the answer remains the same as far as our belief systems are concerned, namely, *what we know from reason about*

God and from revelation about religion remains unaltered—since truth is eternal.

When we know that $2 + 2 = 4$, we do not lay awake nights worrying that tomorrow the sum might change to 5. The same is true here. What has already been established by reason and revelation with objective certitude cannot be changed by new data. One might add to what is already known, but the basic truths about an eternal, omnipotent, infinite, all-good God, the spiritual and immortal nature of the human soul, and the dogma of the Catholic Church cannot and will not change their objective truth and meaning.

Wherever interpretations may be required in order to integrate the fact of alien species existing with existing revealed doctrine, that is for theologians to discuss and the Church to decide. This is much like what happened when the explorers first found the native peoples of the New World. Catholic theologians had to explain (1) that these people were human beings, just like the European explorers were, (2) that they had spiritual and immortal souls, and (3) that they needed conversion and baptism as Christ commanded for all men. That is why all of Latin America right up to the southern American border eventually became Catholic. At the same time, this new recognition of the humanity of these New World “aliens” changed nothing in the basic truths of the Faith as previously held.

If alien intelligences exist, the very fact that they have spacecraft capable of interplanetary travel alone would demonstrate that they are intellectual, rational bodily beings. Since man is a rational animal, they would be, by philosophical definition, part of humanity—maybe not *Earthly* humanity, but human beings nonetheless, philosophically speaking. We might call them by some other name, but they would still have spiritual and immortal souls, as simply evinced by possessing such intellectual abilities as judging and reasoning.

Recall, too, it is not a question of degree of intelligence that determines possession of an intellectual, spiritual soul. Any ability to understand the nature of things at all is sufficient to demonstrate possession of an intellectual soul.

How they are to be theologically integrated with humans native to Earth is, again, a speculative and practical problem for the professional theologians and the Teaching Authority of the Church to determine.

From the above discussion, it should now be evident that we have nothing to fear from any potential encounter with space aliens with respect to either what we hold philosophically or believe theologically, since the essential truths about human nature and God and religious revelation will remain forever unchanged and unchangeable.

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Featured: Part of the crowd at Cova da Iria looking at the Sun on October 13, 1917. Photo taken by the journalist Judah Ruah of the newspaper *O Seculo*, and published in *Ilustracao Portuguesa*, 1917-09-29.
