

# Can The Bayside Apparitions Be Trusted?

by Sebastian R Fama

In December of 1944, the German army attempted to break through the American lines in Belgium. History would remember this as "The Battle of the Bulge." Part of their strategy was to have English speaking Germans infiltrate American lines. They were all dressed in captured American uniforms. While these men may have looked friendly, they were anything but. Before the ruse was discovered a number of Americans were duped into believing that the Germans were actually Americans. No doubt they thought; what looks and sounds like a friend must be a friend. But they were wrong.

Satan is also a deceiver. Consequently, the traps he sets for us can be very enticing. Saint Paul warned the Church at Rome about this very thing:

I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who create dissensions and obstacles, in opposition to the teaching that you learned; avoid them. For such people do not serve our Lord Christ but their own appetites, and by fair and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the innocent (Romans 16:17-18).

In the Bayside section of Queens New York, a woman named Veronica Leuken claimed that she was given messages from Jesus and Mary. These apparitions started in 1970 and continued until her death in 1995. To prepare her for these apparitions she says that Saint Theresa, the Little Flower, began speaking to her in 1968.

On the surface there is much about Bayside that seems very Catholic. People saying rosaries, exhortations on the Eucharist, opposition to abortion etc .... But, as we saw earlier, looks can be deceiving. In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, Saint Paul says the following: "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is not strange if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness."

## Veronica's Messages Contain False Teachings

Several of the messages coming out of Bayside contradict established Church teaching. For instance, Veronica claimed that Saint Theresa directed her to write the following:

In the distant heavens, there lived a most loving Spirit. First there was God, a God of love. Knowing love must be shared to be the fullest joy, He sort of subdivided Himself into a Family. For once even a spirit must share life eternal to reach the fullest degree of peace and joy. For love is in giving. He gave Himself to beget a Son and Holy Spirit (May 1969).

This is a false teaching. It claims that the Father existed prior to the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Church has always taught that the three persons of the Trinity are equal in all things. To quote the Catholic Encyclopedia:

Thus, in the words of the Athanasian Creed: "the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, and yet there are not three Gods but one God." In this Trinity of Persons the Son is begotten of the Father by an eternal generation, and the Holy Spirit proceeds by an eternal procession from the Father and the Son. Yet, notwithstanding this difference as to origin, the Persons are co-eternal and co-equal: all alike are uncreated and omnipotent.

Veronica also had some strange ideas about the significance of the number 666. She claims that Mary told her the following:

The man of perdition, known by you as Mr. 666, is not one man. Repeat, My child, your instructions of 1970. The man of perdition, Mr. 666, as revealed by the prophets but forgotten through time: six is for the six who are coming—demons of special mission loosed from hell in these final days; six is for the six days of great suffering; and six is for the six who will be punished (May 29, 1976).

The book of Revelation explains it differently: "Wisdom is needed here; one who understands can calculate the number of the beast, for it is a number that stands for a person. His number is six hundred and sixty-six" (13:18). Note that it says "it is a number that stands for a person." The real Mary would be aware of this.

### **Veronica's Messages Contain False Prophecy**

Veronica claims to have received the following message in October of 1978:

My children, a conclave shall start, and without prayers you will receive one on the seat of Peter, one with dark spirits, consorting with the devil....Yes, a man of dark secrets and spirit will be placed upon the seat of Peter. Those who have the light know a true Vicar, but those who are in darkness will work for Lucifer.

In September of 1978 Pope John Paul I died. In October of 1978, apparently right after this message was given, Pope John Paul II was elected. He had a long and successful pontificate. He was canonized on April 27, 2014. That doesn't sound like a man who was "consorting with the devil."

### **Veronica's Messages Condemned by Her Bishop**

Because of these and the many other errors found in Veronica's messages, her bishop wrote the following:

I the undersigned Diocesan bishop of Brooklyn, in my role as the legitimate shepherd of this particular Church, wish to confirm the constant position of the Diocese of Brooklyn that a thorough investigation revealed that the alleged "Visions of Bayside" completely lacked authenticity.

Moreover, in view of the confusion created by published reports of messages and other literature by this "Movement," I consider it my obligation to offer Christ's faithful pastoral guidance, lest their faith be endangered by "messages" and "teachings" relayed by "visionaries," which are contrary to the Faith of our Catholic Church (Bishop Francis John Mugavero, November 4, 1986).

On March 25, 2014 Bishop Nicholas Dimarzio also of Brooklyn, reiterated with equal force the ruling of his predecessor. Unfortunately, neither statement had any effect on Veronica or her followers. And that stands to reason when you consider Veronica's statement of February 13, 1977. She said: "I am only in obedience to Jesus and our Lady." In other words, she doesn't recognize Church authority.

To this day, those who promote Veronica's messages maintain that the diocese has never done a proper investigation. They complain that Veronica was never questioned and thus had no opportunity to defend herself. In their pamphlet "Bayside: the Truth Revealed" they say the following: "The diocese broke the law (canon 50, 1983 code): "Before issuing a singular decree, an authority is to seek out the necessary information and proofs and, insofar as possible, to hear those whose rights can be injured."

The main purpose of any investigation is to "seek out the necessary information and proofs." What is in question here is the orthodoxy of Veronica's messages. Veronica's messages have all been made public. No one disputes what is in them. That being the case, what need is there for further investigation? The "necessary information and proofs" are in hand. All that is needed is a decision from the bishop. And we have it.

Veronica's followers are also fond of claiming that her messages have never been condemned because in the bishop's letter he never used the word "condemned." This is nonsense. When condemning something, you don't need to use the word condemn. If you say that something is wrong or bad you have condemned it. And that is exactly what Bishops Mugavero and Dimarzio did.

Bishop Mugavero further stated that his judgement was made in consultation with The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in Rome. Has anyone at Bayside ever appealed the decisions of these two bishops? And if they haven't why haven't they? If as they contend, an injustice has been committed against them, what better way to set the record straight than by appealing to Rome.

In no system where behavior is judged is the accused allowed to determine the outcome. If that were the case judges would not be needed. The authority to determine outcomes belongs to those empowered to do so. Veronica

Leuken and her followers are the accused. The bishop of Brooklyn is the duly appointed judge. And the judge said the Bayside messages are “contrary to the faith of our Catholic Church.”

### **Bayside Handout Glorifies Satan**

One Bayside handout is entitled, “Cryptic Photos from the Other Side.” The leaflet features photos taken during Bayside prayer vigils. Superimposed on the photos are bright squiggly lines, representations of the Holy Spirit, a kangaroo, someone’s dead aunt, and even Satan. This, we are told, is evidence that Veronica’s messages are from heaven. Curiously enough, the photo chosen for the cover of this leaflet was not the one of the Holy Spirit but the one of Satan.

Jesus said that we should judge a tree by its fruit. The fruit of the Bayside movement is bad theology, false prophecy and a rejection of Church authority. That’s hardly the sort of thing that heaven would sanction.

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