



PART II: IS THE NEW TESTAMENT HISTORY?

Did Jesus Really Perform Miracles?

“Christianity is a history supernatural...it tells us who the Author is, by telling us what he has done.”—BLESSSED JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN

BY CHARLIE BATES, BA

In (Part I), we saw that miracles are indeed possible. Those who say all miracles are impossible make claims not based on scientific evidence, but on unproved assumptions and circular arguments.

Miracles are possible, but that doesn't mean we should start looking for a picture of Jesus in our toast. Since most of our knowledge (of everything) is based on human testimony, the real question when evaluating miracles is *do we trust the testimony of people who claim to have witnessed them?* We have faith in Jesus' miracles because we trust the people who wrote the New Testament. Faith and trust, however, are not blind—they do not ignore reason and evidence.

Setting aside theology, which is how we make sense of the faith we've received, we turn to history to determine whether particular particular miraculous events in the New Testament did in fact take place in first-century Israel and Palestine. First of all, it's clear that the Gospel writers themselves intended to record history (Lk 1:1). Luke, in fact, was a historian. Historians base all their claims on testimony; indeed the entire discipline of history is based on testimony. Dr Gregory Boyd of Princeton Theological Seminary points out, *Historians usually operate with the burden of proof on the historian to prove falsity or unreliability, since people are generally not compulsive liars. Without that assumption we'd know very little about ancient history.* If you want to prove all miracles are false, “miracles can't happen” isn't good enough.

Of course, many faithful Christians don't need historical criticism to believe in Jesus and have a relationship with him. Just as in any relationship, one shouldn't be *constantly demanding proofs and employing private detectives* (to borrow a phrase from British theologian Herbert McCabe). On the other hand, Jesus did say *I am the truth* (JOHN 14:6), and St Thomas

Aquinas makes clear that any faith claims we make have to be based on the New Testament writers' credibility.

Craig Blomberg, an influential New Testament historian interviewed in *A Case for Christ*, argues that *there's very strong evidence of the reliability of the Gospel accounts.* In his work *The Historical Reliability of the New Testament* he argues for *believing not in all alleged miracles past or present but in the particular miracles recorded in the Gospels.*

Some object, however, that the New Testament authors couldn't be trusted to write accurate history because they had an ideological agenda. But there are at least two reasons why we know the Gospel writers' ideology didn't prevent them from recording the truth as they saw it:

1. Historians who were not Christian corroborate many of the Gospels' claims, *including some of Jesus' miracles.* One Jewish historian confirmed that Jesus was a healer and miracle-worker. He had incentive to tell the truth: an ally of the same religious authorities who executed Jesus, he tried to discredit him by calling his miracles “sorcery.”
2. There is no such thing as an “unbiased” historian in the ancient world. According to Blomberg, ancient writers only wrote history because *there were some lessons to be learned from the characters described.* Such lessons by their nature have controversial perspectives.

Others object that, while the New Testament writers may have intended to record history, mythical elements were overlaid on the facts in order to express what Jesus meant to his followers (so says Karen Armstrong in *A History of God*). How, in fact, do we know the Gospels' true message has been reliably preserved?

By ancient standards, the Gospels were written extremely close to the

time the events took place. Blomberg points out that compared to other ancient histories (e.g. that of Alexander the Great), the 30-40 year gap between Jesus' death and the initial Gospel writings is negligible. In an age when we get our news seconds after it happened, 30-40 years may seem like a long time. But other universally-accepted ancient historical writings (such as Herodotus' *Histories* and Livy's *Roman History*) were written centuries (and in these cases almost a millennium) after the events took place. The New Testament also has many more manuscripts (copies) than these ancient histories. Influential Scholars Norman Geisler and William Nix have found that the *New Testament has not only survived in more manuscripts than any other book from antiquity, but it has survived in a purer form than any other great book—a form that is 99.5 percent pure.*

The Gospels are credible because they back up each other's claims. Blomberg explains that *the gospels are extremely consistent with each other by ancient standards, which are the only standards by which it's fair to judge them.* The Gospels obviously aren't all the same, and when recounting the same events the details often vary. Rather than exposing contradictions, the variation actually gives them more credibility as historical documents. Blomberg points out that an unrelated study of the transmission of history in the ancient middle east concluded that ten to forty percent of the material varied in details and omissions, which is exactly the amount variation we see in the Gospels. Simon Greenleaf, a key legal scholar of Harvard Law School, wrote, *there is enough of a discrepancy to show that there could have been no previous concert among them; and at the same time such substantial agreement as to show that they all were independent narrators of the same great transaction.*

I may still not understand or agree that philosophy or history can help verify the outlandish claims of Jesus' miracles. These arguments may not be enough to convince unbelievers to believe or believers to strengthen their faith. Over 19 centuries later, these miracles can be difficult to imagine.

But Jesus' first disciples could not avoid answering for themselves whether his miracles actually happened. As philosopher Peter Kreeft points out, Jesus charged this disorganized, simple and cowardly group of people to boldly proclaim throughout the world's most powerful empire that they had seen miracles, and that those miracles had changed their lives eternally. But in the process, all but one of the apostles and countless disciples were martyred—tortured and killed—for their faith. St Peter was crucified. St Paul was beheaded.

How can we trust these New Testament authors when they report miracles? *Nothing proves sincerity like martyrdom*, Kreeft reminds us. The philosophical possibility and the historical evidence for Jesus' miracles are compelling, but there is no more powerful witness to their truth than the lives and deaths of the ordinary men and women whom we now call saints.

St Thomas Aquinas (a champion of reason and logic) reminds us in *Summa Contra Gentiles* that the clearest witness to the truth of Jesus' miracles is not a philosophical or historical argument but the fact that ordinary people, empowered by extraordinary miracles, have come to *believe such lofty truths, to accomplish such difficult actions, and to have such high hopes.*

9 DAYS UNTIL THE

Apostolic Journey Of Pope Francis To The USA

Here is the schedule for Pope Francis' September 2015 Apostolic Journey to the United States of America. Parishioners are encouraged to make time to follow the Holy Father during this journey and join him in prayer for the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 (WASHINGTON, DC)

4:00 PM Arrival from Cuba at Joint Base Andrews

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23 (WASHINGTON, DC)

9:15 AM Welcome ceremony and meeting with President Obama at the White House

11:30 AM Midday Prayer with the bishops of the United States, St Matthew's Cathedral

4:15 PM Mass of Canonization of Junipero Serra, Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24 (WASHINGTON, DC, NEW YORK CITY)

9:20 AM Address to Joint Meeting of the United States Congress

11:15 AM Visit to St Patrick in the City and Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington

4:00 PM Depart from Joint Base Andrews

5:00 PM Arrival at John F Kennedy International Airport

6:45 PM Evening Prayer (Vespers) at St Patrick's Cathedral

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25 (NEW YORK CITY)

8:30 AM Visit to the United Nations and Address to the United Nations General Assembly

11:30 AM Multi-religious service at 9/11 Memorial and Museum, World Trade Center

4:00 PM Visit to Our Lady Queen of Angels School, East Harlem

6:00 PM Mass at Madison Square Garden

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26 (NEW YORK CITY, PHILADELPHIA)

8:40 AM Departure from John F Kennedy International Airport



9:30 AM Arrival at Atlantic Aviation, Philadelphia

10:30 AM Mass at Cathedral Basilica of Ss Peter and Paul, Philadelphia

4:45 PM Visit to Independence Mall

7:30 PM Visit to the Festival of Families Benjamin Franklin Parkway

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 (PHILADELPHIA)

9:15 AM Meeting with bishops at St Martin's Chapel, St Charles Borromeo Seminary

11:00 AM Visit to Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility

4:00 PM Mass for the conclusion of the World Meeting of Families, Benjamin Franklin Parkway

7:00 PM Visit with organizers, volunteers and benefactors of the World Meeting of Families, Atlantic Aviation

8:00 PM Departure for Rome

Celebration of Marriage Retreat

This weekend is intended for couples married at least 10 years. It honors and celebrates the commitment of marriage. Presentations and small group discussions address (1) how we got to this point in our marriages, (2) where we are now and (3) what the future might hold. We strike a deliberate balance among participation/reflection, liturgy, free time and fun and plenty of "couple time." *The retreat will take place on September 18-20 and the cost is \$260 a couple which includes all meals, room, programs, etc. For more information, or to register, call 609.884.3829 or visit: www.capemaymarianists.org.*

Regis H.S. of Manhattan Open House

Regis High School of Manhattan, an all-scholarship Jesuit school for talented and gifted Catholic boys invites students and their parents to its Open House on Columbus Day, Monday, October 12, from 1-4 pm. Also check out the NJ information night on Thursday September 24 at 7 pm at St Luke's Parish, 340 North Franklin Turnpike, Ho-Ho-Kus **For more information, contact Eric Di Michele, Director of Admissions: Regis H.S., 55 East 84th St., New York, NY 10028 (212) 288-1100, Ext 2057; edimichele@regis.org**

St Dominic Academy Open House

Saint Dominic Academy, Jersey City will host Open House events on Sunday, October 4 from 1-3 PM and Thursday, October 8 from 6-8 PM. The events will feature club and athletic demonstrations, presentations by academic departments and the administration, tours of the school and complete details about the application process for Grades 7-12. Information about the 7th and 8th grade Entrance Exam, the COOP High School Entrance Exam and the Academy's Freshman for a Day program will be available at Open House but can also be found on the website: www.stdominicacad.com **Questions can be directed at any time to Andrea Apruzzese, Director of Saint Dominic Academy Admissions at 210.434.5938, Ext. 14 or by email at aapruzzese@stdominicacad.com. St Dominic Academy is located at 2572 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, NJ.**

FEAST DAY – 9/15

Our Lady of Sorrows



Bus Trip to Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes



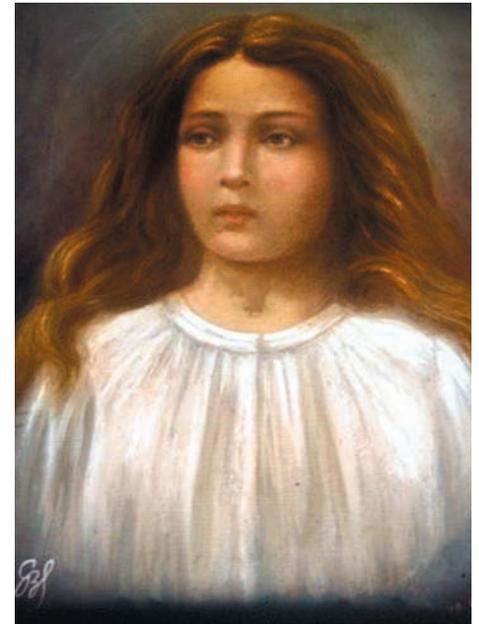
St. Padre Pio bus trip Saturday, September 26, 2015

Come with us to a place in the wooded hills of Connecticut, under a canopy of trees by a stream of flowing water! A place of peace and prayer dedicated to Mary the Mother of Jesus. Pray in a church without walls, stand on holy ground as you follow Jesus and allow Mary's presence to touch your heart.

Bus will leave 8:30 am from in front of St. Anne's Church. For more information, please call Fran Spazian. 201-653-1318.

Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto is located at 83 Montfort Rd, Litchfield, CT 06759

National Tour of the Relics of St Maria Goretti



On Monday, September 21, the Catholic Basilica of the Sacred Heart –Mother Church of the Archdiocese of Newark – will be the first stop on a national tour of the Major Relics of St. Maria Goretti – the Little Saint of Great Mercy.

This tour, designed as an introduction to the observance of a world-wide Extraordinary Holy Year of Mercy, will run from September 21 through November 13 and visit locations in 16 states and 25 dioceses across the country. It is the first time that the Relics of St Maria Goretti, an immensely popular saint, have traveled to the United States, and only the second time that they have been taken on pilgrimage outside of St Maria's native land of Italy. The full schedule for the day will be:

- 9 am – 7 pm – Veneration
- 7 pm – Celebration of Mass
- 8 – 11 pm – Veneration

Presentations on the life and virtues of St Maria Goretti, the youngest person (she died at the age of 11) ever to be canonized by the Church, are also planned for the day.

The Cathedral Basilica of the Sacred Heart is located 89 Ridge Street, Newark. Further information about St. Maria Goretti and the pilgrimage tour may be found at www.mariaGoretti.com

Religious Education News

Classes start Sunday, September 20 at the 10 am Mass!

REGISTRATION for St. Anne's Religious Education Program is processed every year; if your child attended our Program this past year, you MUST RE-REGISTER NOW for 2015-16. Please come to the rectory during Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9:00 am to 5:00 PM. Registration takes place BEFORE SEPTEMBER to allow time to order books! Thank you.

New registrants – If your child needs the Sacraments of Baptism, First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation, please bring a copy of your child's baptismal certificate at time of registration.

If you would like a Registration Form emailed to you, please email St. Anne's Rectory at parishoffice@stannesjc.org.





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Pastoral Team

Fr. Nigel	Parish Priest
Fr. J. Ranieri	Weekend Assistant
Msgr. L.J. Miller	Weekend Assistant
Fr. D.X. Stump, S.J.	Weekday Assistant
Mrs. J. Waddleton & Lt. J. Carroll	Trustee

Weekly Planner

SUNDAY 9/13 • 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
10 AM-1 PM H.N.S. Mass/Mtg-*Church/Cent Hall*
1-3 PM Fil-Am Mtg *Cent Hall*

MONDAY 9/14
1-3 PM St. Anne Seniors *Cent Hall*
3:30-4:30 PM Legion of Mary Convent Comm *Room*
6-8 PM Brownie Mtg *Cent Hall*

TUESDAY 9/15
12:15 PM BINGO *Cent Hall*
3-4 PM Holy Hour for Priests *Convent*

WEDNESDAY 9/16
THURSDAY 9/17
7-9 PM OLG Choir *Convent*

FRIDAY 9/18
12:15 PM BINGO *Cent Hall*

SATURDAY 9/19
SUNDAY 9/20 • 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time
Catechetical Sunday
10 AM-12 PM CCD in Session-1st Day of Classes

Liturgies

Saturday Evening Church <i>(anticipating Sunday)</i>	English 5:30 PM Misa Español 7 PM
Sunday Church	8 AM, 10 AM, 12 Noon
Monday ▶ Saturday: Mass	<i>Church</i> 9 AM
Wednesday: Mass	<i>Church</i> 7 PM

Holy Hour

Tuesdays Convent Chapel 3-4 PM

Sacrament of Penance

Saturdays *Church (Or by Appointment)* 5 PM

Schedule of Masses September 14th - 20th, 2015

Monday, September 14		
9 AM	Lawrence Shin	<i>Family</i>
Tuesday, September 15		
9 AM	† Peter Pisciotta	<i>Family</i>
Wednesday, September 16		
9 AM	† Kay, Walter & Butch Kwiatkowski	<i>Ruth Cullen</i>
7 PM	Special Intention	<i>OL Perpetual Help Group</i>
Thursday, September 17		
9 AM	† Nick Zabala	<i>Carmela Favazzi</i>
Friday, September 18		
9 AM	Cameron Leah Ortiz	<i>Tita Tin tin</i>
Saturday, September 19		
9 AM	† Nick Zabala	<i>Wife, Ruth</i>
5:30 PM	† MaryAnn Ammerata	<i>George & Roz</i>
7 PM	† Elinisia Rodriguez	<i>Parish Intention</i>
Sunday, September 20		
8 AM	† Concetta Pisciotta	<i>Family</i>
10 AM	† Maria Marquez	<i>Amanda & Family</i>
12 PM	† Larry Olaya	<i>St Joseph's Prayer Group</i>

Giving

Financial figures will be posted at a later date.

Sunday Readings

First Reading:	Is 50:5-9A
Psalm:	Ps 116:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9
Second Reading:	Ja 2:14-18
Gospel:	Mk 8:27-35

Weekday Readings

Monday Exaltation of the Holy Cross
Nm 21:4B-9 / Ps 78:1BC-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38 / Jn 3:13-17

Tuesday Our Lady of Sorrows
1 Tm 3:1-13 / Ps 101:1B-2AB, 2CD-3AB, 5, 6 / Jn 19:25-27

Wednesday Saints Cornelius & Cyprian
1 Tm 3:14-16 / Ps 111:1-2, 3-4, 5-6 / Lk 7:31-35

Thursday
1 Tm 4:12-16 / Ps 111:7-8, 9, 10 / Lk 7:36-50

Friday
1 Tm 6:2C-12 / Ps 49:6-7, 8-10, 17-18, 19-20 / Lk 8:1-3

Saturday
1 Tm 6:13-16 / Ps 100:1B-2, 3, 4, 5 / Lk 8:4-15

Sanctuary Gifts for September 13th - 19th

Gift	In Memory/honor of	Requested By
Altar Wine	† Martha Wilson	Frank & Gemma Infante
Altar Bread	† Martha Wilson	Roseann Capparelli
Sanct. Lamp	† Rosemary Canny	K. Castle
Altar Candles	† Cathy Burke	K. Castle

Sick List

Let us pray for the sick (People will remain on sick list for 2 weeks unless otherwise notified): Frances Kearns ● Nicholas Zegular ● Frances Wise ● Vicky Aguillon ● Marie Foley ● Josephine Cermak Rowan ● Steve & Rachel Mastin ● Diane Shea ● Joseph Callandrillo ● Humberto Quintana ● Julia Annicchiarico ● Javier Vega ● Jennifer Moloughney ● Antoinette Maddi ● Carol Jordan ● Anthony Biggio ● Sammy DeLeon ● Shane Quinn ● Alice Daly ● Sadie Krieger ● Dolores DelMonte ● Dianne O'Sullivan ● Carl Carlson ● Larry Bello ● Miyuki Campbell ● Diane Albert ● Meghan Connaughton ● Lupe Pena

Ministry to the Sick

We hope to give to all the sick and aged in our parish the opportunity to receive the Eucharist. If you or someone you know can no longer get to church, and would like a Eucharistic Minister to bring you Communion, **please call St. Anne's Rectory at 201-360-0838 or email: Webmaster@stannesjc.com**

September Prayer Intentions of the Holy Father, Pope Francis

General intention: That opportunities for education and employment may increase for all young people.

Missionary intention: That catechists may give witness by living in a way consistent with the faith they proclaim.

Safeguarding Children and Addressing Abuse

The Catholic Church is Battling Abuse

While most media focus over the past ten or more years has been on the incidents of sexual abuse within the Church, little has been said about the many positive steps that the Catholic Church has taken to address the issue. Dioceses across the country, and especially the Archdiocese of Newark, have instituted compassionate outreach to victims and support services, training and background checks for staff and volunteers, training for children and youth, codes of conduct, reporting requirements to civil authorities, independent Review Boards to investigate allegations and recommend actions under Canon law for offenders, as well as other initiatives.

To date, the Catholic Church is the only youth-serving organization in the country – private or public -- to undertake such a comprehensive program to create and promulgate safe environments for children and young people.

Independent auditors from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have found the Archdiocese of Newark to be fully compliant with the requirements of the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People in every year since audits began in 2003.

Baptism Information



Baptisms take place on the 1st Sunday of every Month: 2 Baptisms per Mass at 10 AM & Noon

Because they will be promising to help raise your child in the practice of the Faith, the church requires that at least one of your child's godparents be a 'fully initiated Roman Catholic,' i.e., one who has been Baptized and received the sacraments of Holy Communion and Confirmation. At the time of registering your child for Baptism, we ask that one of your chosen godparents provide a copy of their Confirmation certificate or some documentation from their church of Baptism or Confirmation indicating the month and year of their Confirmation. **Contact the office with any questions. Thank You.**

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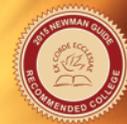
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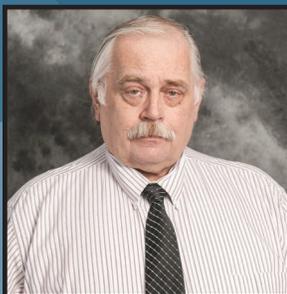
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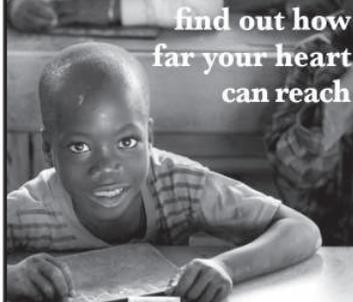
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