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MIRACLE OR SPECTACLE

Virgin apparition over Christmas

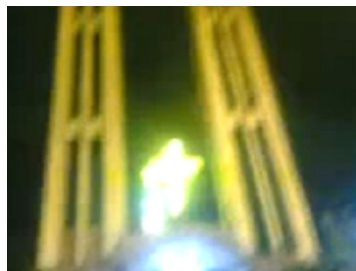


Image capture from YouTube video

BY HAZEL HEYER, ETN STAFF WRITER | JAN 04, 2010

In Egypt during Christmas, in the busy, bustling center of Cairo, a miraculous event drew a huge crowd to the downtown area. Millions of Muslims and Christian Egyptians spent Tuesday night on the streets following news about the apparition of the Holy Virgin Mary over a church in Masarrah in the popular district of Shubra. The Virgin has reportedly successively appeared over many churches in different areas in Cairo, said Katia Saqqa, a local press.

Thick masses of believers and non-believers poured into the jammed streets, rather poorer districts of Cairo. The Al-Misri al-Yawm, December 24, 2009 reported that blinking lights were seen in the skies of Cairo. Many people believe that such lights usually precede the Holy Virgin's apparitions; hence thousands of people rushed to the streets waiting for the apparitions in al-Zaytun, Ayn Shams, Izbat al-Nakhl, Mahmashah, al-Marj, al-Fajjalah, Masarrah, Sixth of October City, al-Umranyah, Imbabah and al-Qalyubiyah.

Al-Misri al-Yawm, related Saqqa, reported that about 50,000 people gathered in Masarrah repeating hymns and prayers for the Virgin. Meanwhile many Muslims gathered reciting the Quranic Surah of Maryam.

The press reported the extraordinary security procedures that were taken in the overcrowded streets. Reporters also reported individual cases of passing out among the crowds, compiled Saqqa. Amr Bayyumi of Al-Misri al-Yawm reported that some people linked to

the virgin apparitions in 1967-1971, and the current apparitions, argued these incidents happen during times of hardships – such as the military defeat of 1967, and numerous sectarian clashes today. They also said that the apparitions of 1967-1971 preceded the death of Pope Kyrillos, wondering whether the current apparitions can be a sign for a soon death of Pope Shenouda, the highest figure/ top leader in the Coptic Orthodox Church.

From the Copts, Bishop Yunnis, Pope Shenouda's private secretary, told al-Misri al-Yawm that Pope Shenouda was hearing the eyewitnesses and will soon announce his final papal comment on the subject. Meanwhile, Saqqa compiled al-Fajr's December 28, 2009 release saying Pope Shenouda's confirmation of the apparitions of the Virgin in al-Warraq, Shubra and al-Zaytun. He said the people's testimonies and the reports of the Bishopric of Giza in this response cannot just be put aside.

In his sermon, Pope Shenouda said that "the beloved Blessed Virgin loves Egypt" and therefore she 'appears' a lot in Egypt. Pope Shenouda also said that the apparitions were also confirmed by Muslims who were close to the churches where the apparitions took place, adding that "Muslims honor the Virgin contrasted to Protestants, and that people of the Catholic Church witnessed the apparitions and made news." In response to sceptics, Pope Shenouda said that those who want to see the Virgin can see her because she allows them to see her, while she does not allow those "complicated" people who reject the idea of the apparition to see her, the Pope said.

Saqqa confirmed he will appoint a committee to study the subject and collect the related information. He elaborated that he had received the report of the Bishopric of Giza and that he was planning to analyze it before giving a final papal comment. However, Pope Shenouda called on the people to "enjoy" the apparitions, said the Egyptian papers. The Egyptian society has witnessed heated debates since the first apparition of the Blessed Virgin in al-Warraq earlier this month. Heated arguments had been reported in the media between those who believe that the apparition is real and those who are sceptical about it.

Sometime back, Christians in Assiut had an apparition which came two-and-a-half weeks in a row but that there have since been several more. Images of the Virgin Mary with outstretched hands

and a light emanating from them, accompanied a smell of incense and large numbers of pigeons, dazzled by-standers. Birds seem to be a common element of the sightings.

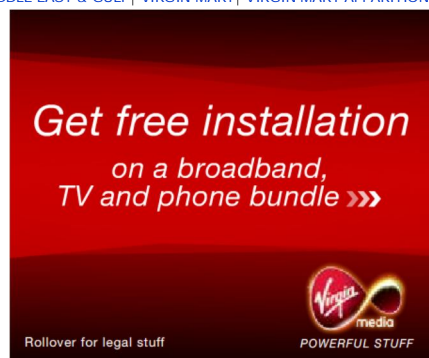
Assiut is believed to be one spot the Holy Family visited for six months and 10 days after fleeing from Bethlehem in Palestine onwards to Egypt. The site is marked by the Church of the Holy Virgin built in March 1960. A monastery in the area is the Holy Virgin Monastery on the western mountain of Assiut - about 10 km southwest of the city. More than 100 meters above the Nile Valley plain, inside the mountain is a cave that dates back to 2500 BC apparently used by the Holy Family on their return journey to Bethlehem. A monastery was built close to this cave. Outside the cave is another rock-cut church of the Virgin and the Archangel Michael.

Two churches are carved between rock layers projecting from the mountain, some 170 meters above the ground; giving it the name Hanging Monastery.

In the 60s, the Egyptian capital made headline news. For more than a year, starting on the eve of April 2nd, 1968, the Blessed Virgin Mother of God, appeared in different forms over the domes of the Coptic Orthodox Church named after her at Zeytoun in Cairo. The late Rev. Father Constantine Moussa was the church priest at the time of the apparitions. The sightings lasted from only a few minutes up to several hours and were sometimes accompanied by luminous celestial bodies shaped like doves and moving at high speed, according to Rev. Father Boutros Gayed, the late rector of the Virgin Mary Church at Zeytoun, the brother of H. H. Pope Shenouda III, Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of St. Mark. Among the witnesses were Orthodox, Catholics, Protestants, Muslims, Jews and non-religious people from all walks of life. The sick were cured and blind persons received their sight. Church followers observed large numbers of unbelievers were converted by the apparitions that lasted for quite a long time; lasting for more than two hours on April 30.

The apparitions have been seen by many thousands of citizens and foreigners belonging to different religions and sects, with groups of religious organizations and scientific and professional personages and all other categories of people who have claimed witnessing such phenomenon. All gave the same accounts, each time they were asked. It has never remained a quiet suburb of Cairo ever since. In a few years, it became densely populated as a residential district.

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JSav on January 6, 2010 - 11:19am

There is one light in the world and that is Jesus Christ the Son of God.

He said I am the Light of the world if you walk with me you would not walk in darkness.

There is one God and one mediator between man and God Jesus Christ the righteous who gave His life a ransom for us.

Without blood there is no remission of sins. That is why Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross for us and for our sins, we come to God with this prayer.

My God I am a sinner I know Jesus Christ shed His blood on the cross for me I ask you to forgive me, wash me with the blood of Jesus from all of my sins, be the LOrd of my life.

In Jesus name I pray, I thank you for forgiving me

[Reply](#) | [Flag](#)**Haydy Sadek** on January 6, 2010 - 9:06am

This is so fascinating, thank you for writing this article. It has alot more depth than other articles i've read regarding the apparition. I'm wondering why it's not being investigated by police, to put to rest the a laser beam accusation? I'm also wondering why it hasn't made it to the news in the us? i think it's definitely news worthy. I believe this a great blessing, my thoughts and paryers go out to all the people struggling in Egypt and the rest of the world.

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