

Holy Family Radio

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Feast of the Archangels

Dear Friend of Holy Family Radio:

The things you learn doing Catholic radio! Last month I had a discussion with a group of Muslims in the Islam booth at the Fair. I wanted their reaction to some Catholic ideas, including Our Lady of Fatima. It was tense at first, then suddenly stunningly favorable. I wondered how the tension could vanish so strikingly. It reminded me of other connections between Islam and Our Lady. We would do well to know the background better than we do.

The Qu'ran has a lot of passages concerning the Blessed Virgin. It mentions, and Muslims generally accept, Mary's Immaculate Conception and Virgin Birth and things like the Annunciation, the Visitation, and the Nativity. Angels are described as accompanying the Blessed Mother and saying, "Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you, and elected you above all the women of the earth." Did you get that?? There is such a strong defense of the virginity of Mary that the Qu'ran attributes the condemnation of the Jews to their calumny against the Virgin Mary.

Don't get me wrong. I am not saying that Muhammad was not possessed by a demon when he dictated the Qu'ran. There is evidence that he was. He thought himself possessed and his nurse thought he, as an infant, was possessed. (He later claimed it was by the angel Gabriel.) What I am saying is that Mary, for Moslems, is the highest woman in Heaven, the only woman mentioned in the Qu'ran, and even surpasses Fatima, the daughter of Mohammed.

A mere 100 years ago, the Blessed Mother revealed herself to three children in the little village of Fatima, Portugal. Do you think that was an accident that she would be known as "Our Lady of Fatima"? It is a big connection to Islam. There are many similar stories.

In 732, Charles Martel halted the advance of the Moslems into Christian Europe. The Saracens fled toward Spain, but a few held out in Aquitaine, in the Southwest corner of France. One group took the castle of Mirambel on the rock overhanging the Gave River in the area now known as Lourdes. Fifty years later, in 778, Charlemagne, returning from his own expedition to Spain, attacked the garrison, whose commander, Mirat, had sworn by Muhammad that he would not surrender to any mortal man. The fortress was impenetrable; it could only be starved into surrender. The siege was desperately prolonged. One day an eagle, carrying a large fish, let it fall inside the castle. Immediately, Mirat sent the live trout out to the besiegers, as if to say that it was an unwanted addition to the plentiful rations of his soldiers. Charlemagne began to despair of victory and spoke of ending the siege, but the Bishop of Le Puy, chaplain to the army, approached Mirat for peace talks. The bishop could see that they were at the end of their resources, but Mirat insisted on his oath. The bishop offered, "You have sworn never to yield to any mortal man. Could you not, with honor, make your surrender to an immortal Lady? Mary, Queen of Heaven, has her throne at Le Puy, and I am her humble minister there." Freed from his oath Mirat surrendered. Later Mirat converted to Catholicism and was baptized under the name of "Lorus." "Lorus," it is said, is the source of the name "Lourdes."

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A few centuries later, Our Lady appeared in Mexico in 1531, to an Aztec Indian convert by the name of Juan Diego and to his sick uncle, Juan Bernardino. As recorded in the Nican Mohopua, an account written in Nahuatl (the Aztec language), she told the uncle she was to be known as, "Cenquizla Ichpochtzintli Santa Maria te coatlaxopeuh" (pronounced: "te quatlasupe") (Roughly, "the perfect Virgin Holy Mary who crushes the head of the serpent")..." (te = stone, coatla = the serpent, xopeuh = crush, stamp out). She was invoking the Immaculate Conception. To bishop-elect Zumárraga, a Spaniard, the Aztec words sounded like the name of another apparition, the Madonna from Spain.

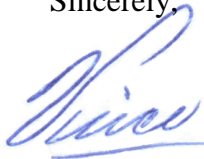
What the bishop was recalling was the story from the middle 700's, when *Tariq Ibn Ziyad* was conquering Spain, converting churches into mosques and destroying Christian icons. Spanish Catholics hid an ancient icon of Mary at the *Guadiana* River, also known as the Wolf River, or in Latin, *lupe*. When Muslims controlled the area they kept the Spanish name, but referred to the local river using the Arabic term *wadi* (valley, oasis) and hence the name stuck and the river area came to be known as *wadi lupe* or *Guadalupe*.

Recently, a modern Muslim convert to the Church points out that there are *wadi lupe* in the Sinai, in Saudi Arabia and in Yemen and that the words *Guadalupe* sound in Arabic like "*Wadd-a-Lubba*" which means *God of love- is in-Her core (heart)*. In other words, there may be even more to this than has come out in extant Catholic writing. The "crescent" is a symbol for Islam. It is interesting that on the Tilma the crescent is under her feet. Mary is the one person who can overcome the twisted and corrupt mess that Islam has created.

Now if all this doesn't make you wonder whether you are seeing prophecy unfold, then you might not be paying attention. Stories like these seem to carry emotional power with Muslims. Mary's comment at Fatima that, "In the end my Immaculate Heart will triumph," starts to make practical sense beyond even the conversion of Russia.

So, happy 100th anniversary of the apparitions at Fatima! Time to go re-read your Marian history. And don't forget to send a check to your favorite Catholic radio apostolate, working to share the insights and hope that Our Lord and His Church have provided for us all! Ave Maria!

Sincerely,



for Holy Family Radio