

Heroldsbach, Germany

Within a period of about 3 years from the 09.10.1949 (Feast of the Rosary) to the 31.10.1952 essentially manifestations of the Virgin Mary as "Queen of Roses" occur, but also of Jesus, and of saints, martyrs and angels [3]. Seers initially were seven young girls (Kuni Schleicher, Grete Gügel, Erika Müller, Marie Heimann, Betty Büttner, Antonia Saam, Irma Mehl). Later, also up to 300 adults had apparitions. The events lasted intermittently over the whole period. In parallel the flow of pilgrims strongly increased; one day end of 1949 about 60,000 visitors were counted. However, the phenomena are still not recognized by the church. Today Heroldsbach is a church-recognized centre of prayer for the veneration of the Mother of God. The centre of prayer has a strong spiritual program. Special events within the month are the Sacred Heart Friday (1st Friday of the month), the subsequent Heart-Mary-Atonement Saturday and the two days lasting Fatima day (12th and 13th of the month).

The apparitions

The above four children have been gathering colorful leaves in the autumn forest. Suddenly they looked up through a birch grove a character, about ½ meter high: J S H (the Hebrew J for JEHOVAH, the Greek H for Hyos (Son) and the romanesque S for SPIRITO SANTO, higher-placed in the centre of three letters) [3] [7] [5].

After a short time a woman in white (like a nun) appeared in the same place and the children believe, they recognized the Virgin Mary. She appeared like transparent. Four days later, the girls are back on the hill and are confronted by the same phenomenon. They ask: What is your wish? And they got the answer:

"People should be praying intensely."

Then they have been blessed by Mary, and the appearance is gone. On 31.10.1949 reverent Walz let the children ask: Dear Mother of God, have you been taken into heaven with your body? Answer:

"Yes, but I remained the little maid."

On 08.12.1949 around 8000 people were present. The pastor of Heroldsbach, John Gailer, reports that he has held a procession. When arriving at the birch forest, where he held a prayer service, suddenly restlessness came up. Then the people cried: "Reverent, stop and see what's there!"

"The sun came up to us and crackled tremendously. Inside, I saw a 20 centimeter wide wreath of roses. Antonie Saam saw the Madonna with child inside the sun. We were five clergymen up on the hill. As long as I live I will testify to that. The sun has shone ½ to ¾ hour. It came closer and went back again. Up to about 4 meters the sun approached. It was seen within a 45 km radius."

When the children asked the Mother of God (formulated by the clergy man J.B. Walz), whether this was a sign of authenticity, the answer was:

"I did that, because there are so many unbelievers, that they may believe it too."

More than 4,000 pilgrims had gathered on 25.12.1949 at 6 p.m. at the apparition site. Mary first appeared with the Child above the birch trees as usual, and said:

"The people should do more penance and pray intensely. During the Christmas season the people shall honour especially the Holy Family, pray the rosary every day, accompanied by a devotion to the Heart of Mary."

In a brochure published by the Episcopal Ordinariate it is stated regarding the apparitions: "If all that was true, Heroldsbach would be a place of grace, which surpasses all shrines in the world with respect to the favour of heaven."

Spring 1950: Time and again, Mary reaches her hands to the children, so that they not only can see and hear but also can feel her. On 09.02.1950 they got the permission to catch a glimpse of heaven and see the Holy Trinity. The children say about it: The most beautiful thing we've seen in life, we would all have preferred to go immediately to heaven.

May 1959: An adult seer had a vision of a large spider web that ran through the whole universe. In its center sat a metal blinking spider. The woman heard a voice: 'This web must not be touched, when it is touched, it will tear'. "As soon as the spider began to move, I heard a terrible roar, it created fissures in the earth, where entire houses sank. I heard great lamentations of the people who were swallowed by the raging earth. There were so many people laid dead on the streets, that one laid them on horse-drawn carriages and led them to the side. We had no more cars and airplanes, also any artificial light. I saw the sea in its swell exceeding houses and transgressing and many towns and villages were flooded. The dishes were mostly poisoned, but the people who ate it died from severe abdominal cramps. We had only a very little amount of healthy food."

A selection from the many apparitions by autumn 1950:

Mary: *"The people have not done what I have asked. They should repent and have not done it. One is just who can stop it, this is the Savior, Jesus Christ. He will avert the disaster, when the majority of believers actually repents and promises improvement. There will come a great famine, and misfortune. Bring candles and matches with you tomorrow, I will hallow them."*

In several apparitions Mary in part weeps bitterly. When they asked about the reason, Mary keeps silent.

On 26.09.1950 she teaches a prayer:

*"O Mary, let us be under your coat.
It is the house, where we can not perish."*

09.10.1950, the first anniversary of the apparitions:

Mary appears and says: *"Dear children, pray, pray, pray!"*

During the night to 01.11.1950, the date of the proclamation of the dogma assumption of Mary into heaven with body and soul, Mary appears with a black rosary and about 300 adults can see her.

Mary appears on 13.03.1951 along with many saints. A large crowd had gathered with the little seers on the mountain. Then Mary appeared with the Infant Jesus and subsequently many saints appearing here and there in the meadow and being noticed and saluted by the children. First, a vision of the Holy Trinity shows above the birch forest. The saints greeted the children and the reverent with a handshake or a blessing. Then St. Aloysius, St. Stanislaus Kostka, St. Agnes, the little St. Theresa and Maria Goretti appeared. When the children once asked for the meaning of the handshake and the appearance of exactly these saints, they hear the answer:

"In order that your hands not act unchaste. You should always be looking in the eyes of Infant Jesus and the Virgin Mary and the saints, so that you may have no joy in unchaste seeing. You shall never give accommodation to the body and its senses because once the court comes, and then everything will be revealed, the good and evil. Heaven has settled upon earth here, but it will close soon."

On 06.05.1951, Mary appears in her big blue coat and called on the present people to close ranks, so that all can fit underneath. - On 13.06.1951 the bloody crucified saviour appears and announces that now a terrible fight begins.

Vision during the wounds Rosary on 10.02.1951: The same woman who had the vision of the "spider" in May 1950 saw above the birch forest a large cross hovering with immeasurable abundance of light; the body of the Crucified was covered with wounds. The crown of thorns pressed on his head, one eyelid was pierced by a thorn. From the wound in his side a light sheaf broke. The blood flowing from the foot wounds flew in purgatory for the refreshment of the poor souls. The Saviour complained that the Church authorities do not believe the apparitions, gave the blessing to the children and said:

"They will only believe it when I carry them off and they will recognize it not till they are in heaven when they come to me. I can no longer hold back the punishing justice."

09.10.1952: Third anniversary of the apparitions. The visionary W.M. had a mystical experience of a Holy Mass. During thanksgiving, she heard the words:

"Your prayers pierce the heaven. Not for long anymore, then you will be helped. There are still many dark clouds lying over the world. Pray, pray, pray a lot!"

The last apparition on 31.10.1952: The children have been prepared for this final day since the 3rd Anniversary by individual apparitions. Around 3 p.m., many people had gathered. Mary appeared with the Infant Jesus and said:

"We have not come to work miracles, but to call for prayer and penance. Continue praying on the mountain, even if we no longer appear here."

Later it was allowed to all who wanted to shake hands with Infant Jesus and also with the heavenly Mother, who closed the evening with a message:

"We are pleased about the many pilgrims who have gathered here. Dear children, dear pilgrims, just a few hours remain now up to the evening. You have to resign yourselves to the fact that today we appear to you the last time. Trust further in our assistance, we will assist you in the greatest need."

Then twenty angels appeared who came from heaven to meet Mary. Above the birch forest, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus, St. Bernadette, Maria Goretti and St. Aloysius with Gemma Galgani, Elizabeth of Thuringia, John Nepomuk and St. Anthony of Padua became visible, as well as others whose names were not disclosed. Then, more and more angels in white, pink, red and blue robes came, among them also many music-making. They played "Friends of God, all together ..." Soon, the pilgrims joined the singing, after the children had begun to hum the melody. At the end St. Theresa said:

We are pleased with the prayers of the pilgrims that they accomplish here wholeheartedly. Trust in our help and continue to pray here, even if we do not come any more. We need to take leave of you, but we'll see us again in heaven. Say, will you stay loyal to us?

At 11 p.m. Mary appeared once again to the seers at the hill plateau: She said:

“Victory will be ours! – One has not followed the words of me and my beloved Son, and to that what we have claimed for the salvation of all. Now it's too late, that humanity will convert if anything. It is the last call that we have addressed to them. Pray much for the priests, that they throw themselves on their knees and pray with you. Every child may shake hands with me and my dear Son.”

Suddenly the appearance disappeared on a light path. During his, suddenly a light blue giant coat emerged, which Angels had turned over the Mother of God, coating the entire mountain. The inside of the coat was scarlet, edged externally with a thick brocade braid - a true royal mantle, the mantle of protection, the Mother of God left onto the world.

Position of the Church:

The local pastor John Gailer was very receptive to the phenomena. Already at the beginning of the apparition period Archbishop of Bamberg Joseph Otto Kolb put in charge an investigative commission which, however, faced sceptically to the events. Already on 30. October 1949 a first public call to all believers was made by the Commission to stay away from Heroldsbach and face the events there with restraint. In early 1950 pilgrimages to Heroldsbach were prohibited by the Diocese [8].

On 6. March 1950 reverent Gailer was prohibited to enter the "Apparition Hill", on 4 August 1951 he was relocated to another parish. On 15. August 1951 in a second decree Rome forbade the "Heroldsbach cult". The seer children, their parents and many "mountain-trailers" were excommunicated in August 1951, because they did not want to sign that they had no apparitions of the Mother of God. On 4. January 1953 the "Pilgrim Association Heroldsbach e.V." was founded. A few months later an eviction was conducted on the hill of the apparition, during which many religious items and equipment were removed and confiscated [3] [8].

Starting in 1985, the Pilgrims Association began to build a Church dedicated to St. Mary. In 1997, the last excommunications regarding Heroldsbach were annulled. On 1. May 1998 the Archbishop of Bamberg, Dr. Charles Brown, officially established the "place of prayer Heroldsbach" as an ecclesiastic foundation, with the consent of the Roman Congregation for Faith. However, he pointed out again that the "alleged Heroldsbach apparitions" of the years 1949-1952 have been evaluated as non-supernatural by the appropriate ecclesiastical authorities. Therefore it can not be allowed in public prayers, sermons and lectures to state the contrary [1].

The place of prayer was inaugurated on 13.05.1998 by auxiliary Bishop Werner Radspieler (former parish priest of Heroldsbach during 1969-1972). Radspieler emphasized reconciliation in his sermon. The "Brothers of Common Life" (Augustinian Canons), headed by Father Dietrich von Stockhausen, CRVC, were commissioned for the pastoral work in the place of prayer. On 15. August 1998 the first Pontifical Mass in the place of prayer was celebrated by Archbishop Charles Brown. In 2003, the new Archbishop of Bamberg Dr. Ludwig Schick said in his Sermon 'on the Mount', that the "place of prayer Heroldsbach shall become a center of new-evangelization for the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Germany and beyond."

With respect to the 60th Anniversary year, in the period October 2008 until October 2009 a petition for the resumption of the examination process for the supernatural manifestations of Heroldsbach has been conducted by the Pilgrim Association Heroldsbach. By this nearly 17,000 signatures have been gathered, which were handed over to the Archbishop of Bamberg and to the Pope in October 2009 [2].

Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo once spoke on Heroldsbach as follows: When in 1967 a German pilgrim group approached his confessional, he exclaimed: "What do you Germans want else! The Madonna has descended down to you! Heroldsbach is a place of grace" [8].

Bibliography

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