

Maryland visionary claims Marian warnings



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EMMITSBURG, Md. -

Has the world entered a period of heaven-ordained tribulations for its sins - of “disasters naturally, humanly and spiritually” - as proclaimed by missionary pharmacist and Emmitsburg visionary Dr. Gianna Sullivan?

(AP Photo/The Roanoke Times, Alan Kim)
Virginia. Tech senior Kevin Sterne is carried out of Norris Hall at Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., on Monday, after he was shot. Sterne survived, but 33 others, including the gunman, died.

Sullivan, who claims to have seen Marian apparitions since 1987, and her supporters believe so. They point to the recent killings at Blacksburg, Va., as among the harbingers of this Virgin Mary-predicted ordeal.

“As a matter of fact, we feel that there is yet another ... validation of this,” said Nikki Todd, who, with her husband, Al, published an annotated journal of the Emmitsburg Madonna’s 3,000 purported messages, visions and warnings to Sullivan.

“[The Virgin Mary] said ... that we will see the occurrence of massive numbers of fish dying,” Todd added, noting that the current issue of National Geographic magazine features a special report on worldwide fish decline. “We believe that we are seeing the unfolding of the prophecies.”

Foretold in the Bible and in other Marian apparitions, the testing period is believed by Sullivan to have begun around the time of the Sept. 11 attacks - and will be followed by periods of holy recourse from suffering, a universal illumination of one’s spiritual state and call to sanctity, a catastrophic time of purification and, finally, a “spiritual springtime” on Earth.

But the messages and fateful events, Sullivan says, are not intended to intimidate and frighten, but to warn, and to foster repentance and reformation among a straying people.

According to her husband, Dr. Michael Sullivan, who operates a free dental and medical mobile clinic that visits Reisterstown twice monthly, the couple was called to public ministry at Emmitsburg in 1993. There, Sullivan conveyed the messages - which she alone experiences - in weekly services at St. Joseph’s Church.

In 2000, however, Baltimore Archbishop William Keeler suspended the Marian service there and, in a decree finding the matter “clearly non-supernatural,” barred it from archdiocesan property in 2003.

The devotion, which the Sullivans say Catholics are free to believe or reject, now attracts hundreds in rented space at Frederick’s Lynnfield Event Complex on the first Sunday of every month.

“The word is ‘chaos,’ “ said Michael Sullivan, characterizing the Virginia Tech massacre in terms of the messages. “It’s just an element of the [signaled] chaos that we can expect. ... I think we’re in for a period of pain and loss and suffering on a scale that mankind may never have seen.”

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