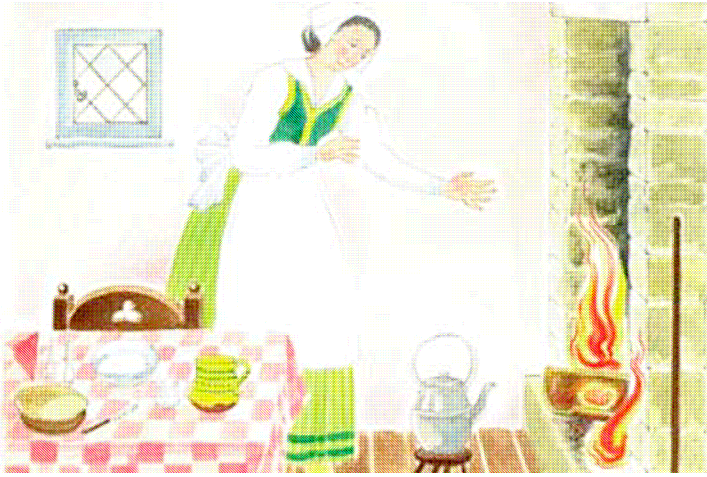


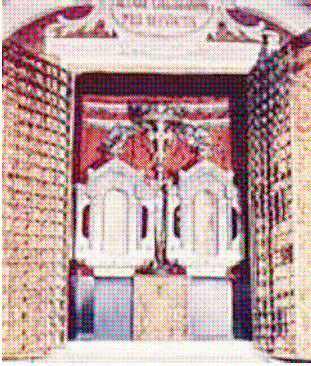
ITALY, 1273

Eucharistic Miracle of Offida



In 1273, at Lanciano, a woman named Ricciarella, in order to regain the affection of her husband Giacomo Stasio, at the suggestion of a sorceress, came up to Holy Communion to steal a consecrated Host. Returning to her house, she put the Host over a fire above an earthenware jar with the intention of reducing it to powder and then putting it in her husband's food. The Host, however, was transformed into bleeding flesh. Ricciarella, terrified by what was

happening, wrapped up the jar and the bleeding Host in a linen cloth and then buried it in a hole under a pile of manure in her husband Giacomo's stable. Giacomo's donkey, every time it entered the stable, knelt down and genuflected towards the place where the miraculous Host was buried, so much so that it made Giacomo suspect that his wife had inflicted a curse on the animal. Seven years later Ricciarella, filled with remorse, confessed her horrible sacrilege to Father Giacomo Diotallevi of Offida, who was prior of the Augustinian monastery in Lanciano at that time. As the earliest accounts tell us, the woman, in tears, began to shout to the priest: "I killed God! I killed God!" The priest, when he arrived at the stable, found the wrapped up bundle intact together with the Relics, which were then handed over to her fellow citizens. To preserve the Sacred Host, the citizens of Offida made a reliquary in the form of a Cross. As an ancient narrative reports, Brother Michael and a fellow religious brother were sent to a goldsmith in Venice. Arriving there, they made the goldsmith promise "that he would not tell anyone what he was about to see and place inside the Cross." The goldsmith then took the pyx containing the miraculous Host into his hand, but was immediately overcome with a high fever. The goldsmith, filled with terror at that point, exclaimed: "What have you brought me, my brother?" The monk then asked him if by chance he was in the state of mortal sin. The goldsmith answered "yes," made his confession, and the fever disappeared immediately. He then took the pyx, took the Host out of it, and placed it in the Cross. There are numerous documents which describe the miracle, among which is an authentic copy of a parchment from the 13th century, transcribed by the notary Giovanni Battista Doria in 1788. There are, in addition, numerous Papal Bulls, beginning with that of Pope Boniface VIII in 1295, up to that of Pope Sixtus V in 1585. Today the Relic of the jar and the cloth stained by Blood together with the Cross containing part of the miraculous Host are exposed in the Church of St. Augustine in Offida. The house of Ricciarella at Lanciano has been in turn converted into a small chapel. In 1973, the seventh centenary of the Miracle was commemorated, and on May 3 of each year, the citizens of Offida celebrate the anniversary of the Miracle.



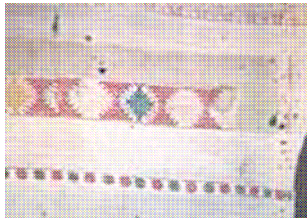
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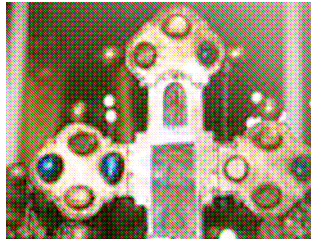
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(5)



- (1) Relics of the Miracle
- (2) The earthenware jar where the Miracle took place, Offida
- (3) Relic of the Blood-stained linen in which Ricciarella wrapped the miraculous Host
- (4) Detail of the Blood-stained linen
- (5) Enlarged image of the Relic of the Host contained in this precious Cross made by a Venetian goldsmith (13th century)