Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in Luggau

AUSTRIA, 16th century

There is little known regarding the town of Luggau in Carinthia; today there are about 500 inhabitants, but at the end of the 16th century it was composed of about 18 homes inhabited by peasants who worked in the fields and in the woods of the hills of Petersburg.

In that century on the site where today stands the Basilica there was a rice field, cultivated by a peasant, but poor woman. One day, fatigued from work, she sat down and fell asleep. In a dream she had something like a vision: in that same spot a church was to have appeared and actually she herself would have had to engage herself in this construction. Awakened from sleep, for a moment at first she did not think anymore about the vision also because she was not able to understand that a poor woman such as her could have erected a church, nevertheless the idea became recurring. Therefore she said to herself: "If in all this there is something of truth, I will light a candle in the field and this must continue to glow for three days and three nights. In that case I will have to retain that the vision had come from Heaven." She placed a candle in the field and despite the strong wind this burned for three days without ever extinguishing. Therefore with her savings she bought first of all an image of the Sorrowsful Mother, a "Pieta" that she brought from home to home telling the event and asking for help for the construction of the church, but the woman collected only derision and insults. Furthermore she was visited and accused of being a crook and for that she was locked in prison, but soon her righteousnesses the judge released her soon after. The sufferings and humiliations she endured changed the attitude of the countrymen toward her and some peasants, without having been asked, supplied some quality lumber for the construction of the chapel where the image was placed of the Sorrowsful Mother that the woman had acquired.

While the carpenter was working on the roof shingles, a resident of the area, mentally impaired, entered into the little chapel and taken aback perhaps by the vivid colors of the statue, he took it with him and was about to carry it away when the carpenter rebuked him, exhorting him to put the sacred image back in its place. The narrator says that the poor creature obeyed the worker's command and simultaneously regained the use of his intellect. The event contributed to spreading even more the fame of the little shrine.