Apparition of the Virgin Mary in MARBACH

Marbach is a little city that is set on an enchanting hill situated on the left shore of the Danube. The Shrine of Maria Tafel is dedicated to the Blessed Sorrowsful Mother.

The location of the shrine was formerly inhabited by Celtic populations that participated in pagan cults. A sacred Celtic altar remains outside of the basilica which was discovered during excavations conducted near an oak tree. As a sign of veneration to God, the people attached a small wooden cross to the oak tree and a pagen altar was found at the foot of this same tree. The cross was attached to a plaque that gave this place its name, Bein Tafel and then subsequently became known as Maria Tafel.

January 14, 1633, a shepherd named Thomas Puchmann decided to knock down the old oak tree in Tafel. He tried to hit the tree but the ax slipped and gravely wounded both of his legs. Only then he realized that there was a cross attached to the oak. Seeing himself at the end of his life, he repented and asked for forgiveness for his sacrilegious act. Miraculously, then the bleeding from the wounds stopped and he was able to return home completely healed. Based on this event, between 1641 and 1642, Judge Alessandro Schlingnig of Kühnheimmühle, placed a small statue of Our Lady of Sorrows on the oak tree and it instantly healed him as well from a grave illness. From 1658, 26 apparitions of light and mysterious characters began and repeated various times in the following years, always accompanied by miraculous healings. After positive results from a commission of surveys instituted in 1659 used to study the authenticity of the events, with interrogations of many eyewitnesses, it was decided to construct a great shrine. On March 19, 1660 the first Mass was celebrated. On April 25 the first stone of the shrine was put in place and the construction lasted seventy years. The masters of construction were Georg Gerstendörfler, the imperial architect of Vienna, later Carlo Lurago and lastly the designer of the dome, Jakob Prandtauer. The festive inauguration of the shrine took place on April 25, 1724 handled by Cardinal of Pesseu, Josef Dominik Graf Lamberg, while the main altar was completed only in 1738. Pilgrimages developed quickly and from then on they have never stopped. Pope Pius XII elevated the shrine to the rank of a basilica minor.