

**THE APPEALS
OF OUR LADY**
APPARITIONS
AND
MARIAN SHRINES
IN THE WORLD

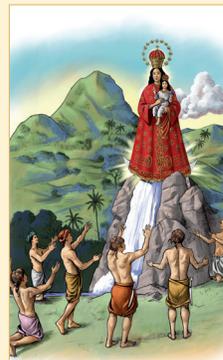
Apparition of the Virgin Mary in KALLIKULAM



INDIA, 1939

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he Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Kallikulam is one of the most important in India. It is found in the district of Tirunelveli, in the state of Tamilnadu. In recent years, it had become famous in India because of the vision and apparition of Our Lady, who manifested herself in Kallikulam in 1939. The origin of the Shrine, however, is indebted to several Jesuit missionary priests. In 1884, the inhabitants of the village of Kallikulam and the Jesuits indeed decided to construct a new church dedicated to the Blessed Mother. They were undecided upon the grandeur and location of the church and therefore they beseeched Our Lady to illuminate them with a sign. One day, on a hot summer morning, they found a plot of land completely covered in dew, so much so that it seemed covered with snow. They marveled at this unusual event and understood it to be related to the miraculous intercession of Our Lady who indicated the site on which to make the church emerge. More than half a century later, on the 29th of March 1939, around 6:30 in the evening, Mary appeared on a hill near the church of Kallikulam, encircled by a luminous white light. With her white veil, she was turned toward the church and was praying with her hands joined. At her feet flowed a cascade of water. Six young men (Gnana Athikkam, S. P. John, M. G. Thomas, D. Thasan, R. Thasan, M. A. Thasan) were present at the apparition for several seconds, because shortly thereafter she disappeared. The following morning, they proceeded to the hill of the apparition and they found a pair of human imprints on the rock, where the apparition took place. They left a mark indicating the imprints and informed the Rev. Father Marianoos, priest of the parish, in addition to the school-teacher Laxmana Iyer and the villagers. Initially, Fr. Marianoos and the people of the village did not want to believe them. The teacher of the school said that she would have believed the apparition only if she had seen a real waterfall on the hill. It was a period of drought and had not rained in 13 years in the arid area of Kallikulam. That day, after mid-day, around three, it began to rain copiously for an hour and a half, in Kallikulam and in the vicinity; thus, on the top of the hill, where the apparition occurred, a cascade of water formed. After that sign of nature, everyone began to believe in the apparition and on the site was constructed a Pandal (a temporary structure) with coconut leaves. Also erected was a cross of stone. Every evening a lantern was lit at the place of the apparition. One day, the lantern fell and rolled down the hill all the way to its slope, where it was found by the people, in its correct position, intact and lit. After some time, a young man from the village of Singamparai went up the hill to be cured from his infirmity. He had all of his fingers bent and was not able to perform any labor. He poured some oil into the imprints, at the apparition site, and he rubbed it on the palm of his hands and on his fingers. Suddenly his fingers unfolded. He was very happy and, filled with gratitude, he reported the miracle to the inhabitants of the village, showing them his fingers. In 1940, the construction began of a staircase that went to the apparition site. At the time 2.5 rupees per step were needed to dig out the staircase on the apparition hill, which is why many people wired funds via money order for the fulfillment of the project. World War II was underway, most of the Money Order donations were executed by the soldiers. Thanks to those donations and to other offerings of the inhabitants of the village, the staircase and the lateral pilasters of support were built for the apparition site on the hill. In 1941, the Bishop of Tuticorin, Roch Victoria, came on a visit to the hill, he blessed it and placed a commemorative plaque. Subsequently a grotto was constructed on the hill in commemoration of the apparition of Our Lady. Ever since, the faithful of the parish and of the surrounding areas gather together each Saturday in that location. The prayers are held every Saturday evening. Each year, there is also celebrated a 10 day feast during which Masses and Novenas occur. The people coming from various areas of India visit the hill of the apparition mostly on the first Saturday of each month, as requested by Our Lady in Fatima. Catholics are not the only ones to visit the Shrine in great numbers during the whole year but so do the non-Christians. Each year hundreds of miraculous healings are registered. Here, Our Lady of the Snows is commonly known as Panimatha which is a Tamil word that means 'Pani-Snow' and 'Matha-Mother.'



Our Lady appears to six young Indian men in 1939



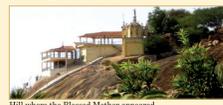
Statue of the Miraculous Panimatha (Snow-Mother)



Procession of one of Our Lady's statues venerated in the Shrine during the 10-day feast



Statue venerated in the Shrine of Panimatha



Hill where the Blessed Mother appeared



The grotto of Lourdes was constructed upon the request of the Virgin who appeared in a dream to a little girl



View of the Shrine



Interior of the Shrine

