Weeping of the Virgin Mary at SYRACUSE

ITALY, 1953

From August 29 to September 1, 1953, at the house of the Iannone couple in Syracuse, tears flowed from a small plaster plaque depicting the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which were later determined to be of human type. On December 13, 1953, the Bishops Conference of Sicily recognized the supernatural character of the weeping, confirmed by successive statements of Pope Pius XII (October 17, 1954) and of Pope John Paul II (November 6, 1994). The Marian image is currently preserved in the Shrine of the Weeping Madonna, inaugurated on November 6, 1994.

Angelo Iannone and Antonina Lucia Giusti lived in Syracuse. Antonina was expecting her first child. She had a difficult pregnancy, with recurring diminishments of her sight. Towards 3 AM night of August 29 her sight disappeared completely, but at 8:30 AM it returned and Antonina saw some tears falling on the face of a small plaster Madonna, placed at the head of her bed.

The half-drop of plaster inserted into a picture, depicted the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and was a gift received for their wedding, celebrated on March 21 of that year. The weeping repeated various times from August 29 to September 1 and none of it agreed rapidly, and the Iannone house became a destination of unceasing pilgrimage. Initially the attitude of the Church was very prudent: the priest, Father Giuseppe Bruno, with the permission of the Curia entrusted the phenomenon to a scientific commission, presided by Dottor Michele Cassella, an atheist. After the withdrawal of the lacrymal liquid, that marked also the end of the phenomenon, and after an examination of the small plaque, on September 9, 1953 the commission concluded that the tears were of human type and the phenomenon was not explainable scientifically. On December 13 of the same year, the Bishops' Conference of Sicily declared the authenticity of the lacrimation. The small plaque remained exposed to the veneration of the faithful in Piazza Square until 1994, before being preserved in the shrine that was built later.

On November 6, 1984, Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of his pastoral visit to the city of Syracuse, during the solemnity for the dedication of the Shrine of the Weeping Madonna, said among other things: “The tears of Mary belong to the realm of signs they testify to the presence of the Mother in the Church and in the world. A mother weeps when she sees her own children threatened by evil, spiritual or physical. Shrine of the Weeping Madonna, you exist to remind the Church of the weeping of the Mother. May all those who are oppressed by the awareness of their sins come here within these welcoming walls and experience the richness of the mercy of God and of His forgiveness! May the tears of their Mother guide them here.”