et in a large grove in the heart of the Sibillini Mountains between sloping forests and steep rocky walls, entirely immersed in silence and isolated between the mountains, in the enchanting Shrine of Our Lady of Ambro. Situated on the slopes of Mount Frasera and Mount Castel Manardo, the shrine is the oldest one in the Italian province of Le Marche and after Loreto, the most important and most visited Marian place. Every year it is the destination of millions of pilgrims, who not only increase in numbers, but they stay to visit this place in worship to give homage to the Virgin Mary. The shrine gets its name from the nearby Ambro River, which flows from the Tenna River that runs right next to it and during the hot summer days it gives off a pleasant feeling of freshness. It is also called the “Little Loreto of the Sibillini Mountains” because of its similarity to the river in France and the “coincidence” that link them in some ways. Loreto is in the Pyrenees Mountains and Ambro is in the Sibillini Mountains; the Gavo River runs next to Loreto and the Ambro River runs next to this shrine; in Loreto the Virgin appeared to a little girl named Bernadette and in Ambro the Virgin appeared to a little girl named Santina. Also, the rock that frames the area, almost recreates the same atmosphere of the grotto where the Virgin Mary appeared to little Bernadette in Lourdes. Located in the hollow of a beech tree there was an image of Our Lady and one day, a shepherds named Santina, deaf and mute from birth, was leading her herd to pasture in this area and as usual she would bring Mary some flowers that she collected along the way. One day in the month of May, the year 1909, the Virgin appeared to her on this sacred rock surrounded by a splendid light and in exchange for her prayers and wild flowers that the little girl always brought to her in homage, she gave her the gift of speech. The story described above can be read on a commemorative plaque granted by Father Pedretti de Migliano and posted inside a chapel engraved as follows: “In May 1909, the most holy Virgin, surrounded by extraordinary splendor, appeared on this sacred rock to the humble shepardess Santina, mute from birth. The young girl received the gift of speech in reward for the prayers and offerings of wild flowers that she gave every day to the image of Our Lady on the hollow of a beech tree...”

Since the beginning of the XI century, the small Church of Saint Mary in Amaro or Saint Mary of Steinerana was built on this sacred place of the apparition and entrusted to the Benedictines of the nearby Abbey of Saint Vincent and Ascoli, embellished and decorated with many fine donations from the Barons and feudal lords of the area. It later went under the jurisdiction of Fermo and its archbishop, Felice Peretti who later became Pope Sixtus V, who ordained the canon laws of the Cathedral of Fermo to send a permanent chaplain. In the beginning of the 1600s the Church of Saint Mary in Amaro became too small and worn down over time and thus it was ready for the construction of a bigger and newer building. The job was entrusted to architect Ventura Venturi of the Holy House of Loreto who was in charge of designing the church, the current shrine as it appears today, which incorporated the original church within the interior with 6 side by side chapels located along the nave. Central to the devotion is the miraculous image of Our Lady, a classic work from the XV century, sculpted in stone and colored with oil. Our Majestic Lady is seated and seated on a golden throne and to the side kneeling is the blessed Child. Because of the great devotion to this venerated image, a symbol of miracles and graces, the Vatican City decreed the coronation on April 23, 1922 in which the celebrations took place on August 9, 1925. The feast day, celebrated with a festival, takes place on August 18. The first Sunday in September there is a distinctive offering of “baskets of wheat” and a procession of a pious woven wooden crucifix that was donated by the sanctuary of Pope Pius XI in 1933. Since 1869 the shrine has been run by the Order of Capuchin Friars Minor and still today they are attentive and considerate custodians.