



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

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in KEVELAER



GERMANY, 1641

Kevelaer, a small town near Düsseldorf, is one of the most visited places of Marian devotion in all of Germany. This Shrine was requested by the Virgin herself, on Christmas of 1641, to a street merchant by the name of Hendrick Busman, who, passing through the countryside of Kevelaer, had stopped in front of a niche with a cross where he often paused to pray, and he heard a voice that ordered him: "In this location you must construct a little chapel in my honor." Surprised, the peddler looked around and, having not seen anyone, proceeded on his way without thinking anymore about what happened. Nevertheless, one week later, passing by there again, he heard once more the mysterious words, the significance of which became clear and distinct to him when his wife, Matilde Schrouse, a few months later, had a night vision of a small chapel with an image of the Blessed Mother of Luxembourg in it, of which she had earlier refused the purchase proposed by two traveling soldiers. Her verbal declarations on the occurrences in the territory of Kevelaer were included in the memorandum by the Synod of Venlo, the ecclesiastical interrogation commission convoked in 1647, which approved almost immediately the pilgrimage of Kevelaer.

Here is the statement of Hendrick Busman: "I am married to Mechel Schrouse, who is about 50 fifty years old. I earn my living being a merchant, and for this reason I am forced to move around from one place to another. So, during the Christmas season of the year of the Lord 1641, I was returning from Weese on the road that is found nearby Kevelaer. The first time I did not pay attention to that voice and I proceeded on my way. After seven or eight days I found myself again on the same road, and at the same point I heard for the second time, in a clear and distinct way, the same voice and the same words, that originated from the side of the cross. Considering the possibilities and the means at my disposal, I felt had about it. However I felt a sense of duty to carry out that task, so I decided to put aside each day a portion of my modest earnings to construct a holy niche. Afterward, a month before Pentecost, it happened that my wife Mechel had a vision of a great resplendent light that enveloped a niche containing an image similar to one that she had noticed in the hands of two soldiers some time ago. They were bringing from Luxembourg two paper images of Our Lady and had tried to sell them – if not both, at least one – to Mechel. Nevertheless she did not purchase them since the price to her seemed too high. In any case, this occurrence convinced me to give greater credit to the matter, so I sent my wife to those soldiers to seek those images. They, however, had delivered them to the second lieutenant, who at the time was in Kempen under arrest. When he was released, Mechel went to him and asked for one of the two images. Initially, the image was conserved and venerated in Geldern. Hendrick Busman describes the inception of pilgrimage like this: 'At a later stage, the Capuchin fathers and the community requested that the image would be brought in procession to Kevelaer. One Saturday evening, at the end of May in 1642, the parish priest of Kevelaer took the image in secret, and the following day placed it in the niche built by me in the shape my wife had seen it in the nocturnal apparition. Immediately, in the same day, many people rushed there, coming from Geldern and from other locations.' Afterward, many miracles took place that were documented. All that is affirmed here occurred in the way described and is true and real. I, Hendrick Busman, am ready to swear it. I declare all this so that the glory of God and of His Most Holy Mother and Virgin is propagated all the more."

Hendrick Busman and his wife sealed the testimony of their faith with a writing at the base of the votive capital. The same year in which the sacred image was placed in the little chapel, at times up to 20,000 pilgrims a day were counted and, according to a report, in the years that followed more than 100,000 gathered there. To accommodate them, from 1643 to 1645 a church was built and, in 1647, the house of the priests, destined to host the Oratorians invited by the Bishop of Roermond to be of service for the spiritual needs of the pilgrims. During World War II, despite being situated in a zone of military operations, the Shrine was saved because of the prayers to the Virgin by the residents of the area and because of the courage of one German official who did not obey the order to blow up the Basilica and the two chapels of Grace and of Candles. The Shrine is visited today by about 600,000 pilgrims each year.



Scene that portrays Hendrick Busman while he is in prayer and hears a mysterious voice that asks him to build a chapel in her honor

The picture of the Blessed Mother came to life and from it the Blessed Mother manifested that she had to build a chapel in her honor

Picture that portrays Our Lady of Kevelaer

The miniature picture seen by the wife of Hendrick Busman

The Basilica of Kevelaer

The original Chapel

Interior of the Basilica

Votive capital that portrays a procession in honor of the Virgin of Kevelaer

Libelated statue in honor of Hendrick Busman

Interior of the small Chapel

Interior of the Basilica