

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

## Apparition of the Virgin Mary at SAINT BAUZILLE DE LASYLVE



FRANCE, 1873

had two children. It was Sunday, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, nevertheless he did not avoid work. two hours, Auguste Arnaud sat for a moment to rest and eat something. He took his pipe to smoke when he suddenly saw in front of him a luminous figure, a young woman clothed entirely in white. covering also her hands crossed on her chest. Amazed, Auguste got up and asked her in the dialect of his region: "Who are you?" The Apparition answered in the same language: "I am the Holy Virgin. Do not be afraid." Auguste, reassured, listened with emotion to the words of Mary:

"You have the illness of the vineyard. You have abandoned Saint Bauzille, His feast must be celebrated on the day in which it recurs. Next Thursday, you should go to Saint Antoine in procession and have a Mass celebrated. From today, every fifteen days, you should go in procession to Notre-Dame. For all the canton of Gignac, Montpellier and the city of Lodève. You should erect a new Cross and replace the current one. You will have to place a Cross with the figure of the Virgin at the end of the vineyard and you will have to go there every year in procession. Go immediately to tell it to your father and to your curate. In a month I shall return to thank you." After these words, the Apparition rose high towards the sky, like a sphere that disappears a little at a time. At the end of the vision, Auguste stopped working, left the vineyard and returned home, with his heart illuminated by a wondrous secret. Upon arriving home, Auguste believe him. How was it possible that the Virgin had appeared to a man who was working on temporary cross: in the meantime he ordered in Montepellier a cross forged in iron, with the figure of the Virgin at the center, as ordered in the vision.

On Thursday, June 12, he went with his family to the hermitage of Saint Antoine. On Sunday, June 22, he completed the pilgrimage to Notre-Dame de Grâce, in Gignac. After having participated in the Holy Mass, he spent the whole morning there in prayer. Finally, on Friday, July 4, he mounted the iron cross to a stone pedestal, in place of the wooden cross. Meanwhile the date of the second apparition announced by the Virgin Mary kept getting closer. In the meantime, the news of the event had spread in the vicinity. Curious, skeptic and devout people were arriving

he village of Saint-Bauzille-de-la-Sylve is located in the Hérault department. The Virgin The wife of Auguste Arnaud was afraid for her husband. "And if the Virgin does not return? Mary appeared there twice in 1873. On June 8, 1873, a thirty-year old man, Auguste But Auguste did not have any doubt: he had done everything that she had requested him, thus Arnaud, went into his vineyard to cultivate it. He was married for six years and he he was sure that she would come back. Tuesday, July 8, early in the morning, Auguste, left his home to go to work on his vineyard. He was not alone. A large crowd had rushed to witness what He was not a bad Christian, actually, he often went to Mass on Sunday. After having worked for was about to occur. About five-hundred people were present. Auguste began to cultivate the vineyard, awaiting the coming of the Virgin. At a certain point, he stopped to rest. It was at that instant that everyone saw him remove his hat, raise his arms to the sky and focusing on something She wore a fringed belt and on her head she had a tall crown, resembling the miter of a Bishop. that only he could see. During that brief moment and in that position, he oscillated and then, Alarge white veil went from the top of the crown and enveloped her completely, from head to feet, suddenly, from the left, he was carried at lighting speed towards the cross, always in the same position, lifted by a celestial force over the ground and the shoots of the vineyard. He had traveled a distance of about forty meters; everyone had witnessed this miraculous phenomenon. At this point, he turned his glance above the iron cross and prayed in silence. The Virgin was there; she was clothed like the first time but her garments were a golden color and a Rosary was hanging from her joined hands. She turned to him, always in the local dialect: "One must not work Sunday. Blessed is the one who will believe and unfortunate is the one who will not believe. One must go in procession to Notre-Dame de Gignac. You and all your family shall be blessed." Then she let the Rosary slip on her left hand, and with her right hand, she blessed the crowd, like the priests do at the end of the Mass. She spoke a final time requesting: "Recite some chants." And she disappeared. So Auguste said, with a faint voice: "Tell them to sing". The crowd sung the Magnificat.

The place soon became a destination of pilgrimage. Many people were coming to pray where the Virgin had appeared; they were leaving candles, flowers, rosaries. The Bishop of the Diocese, Monsignor de Cabrières named a commission of inquiry, and after having questioned the visionary Arnaud recounted to his father what he had seen; together they went to the curate of the village and the witnesses, he recognized the authenticity of the apparitions in 1876. to speak to him. The curate received them coldly and said clearly to the visionary that he did not Auguste Arnaud lived the rest of his life in faith and in devotion to Mary, without ever trying to get rich and always observing the Sunday rest. He suffered much for the anticlerical laws of 1905 Sunday? Anything but disconcerted by this reception, Auguste Arnaud continued his mission. The that hindered the construction of the Shrine, for the death of his wife and of three of his children, following day he had a wooden cross built by the carpenter in the village and planted it the same one of them a priest. He faced these trials with great courage and considered them always as the evening at the end of his vineyard, in the place indicated by the Blessed Virgin. It was only a will of God. He was never taken by doubt or by despair. Those who knew him spoke of his radiant face and of the serenity of his expression; it was the reflection of the profound peace that enveloped his soul, even in the moments of sorrow. A chapel was built near the place of the apparition as well as a convent in which settled the Franciscan Sisters who arrived in 1893 to be in charge of

















