



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

Apparition of Our Lady of Divine Love in ROME



ITALY, 1740

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he historical events surrounding the Shrine of Our Lady of Divine Love began in the XIII Century when in the Campagna area of Rome there stood a type of fortress belonging to the Savelli-Orsini family, called the Leva Castle. On one of the towers was a fresco of the Virgin Mary, portrayed as sitting on a throne with Baby Jesus in her arms and a dove falling upon her symbolizing the Holy Spirit, who is indeed the Divine Love.

The first miracle happened in the spring of 1740. A drifter was heading for Rome, he reached the area around the tower and he was attacked by a pack of dogs that were about to tear him to pieces. The unfortunate man lifted his eyes, saw the icon and asked the Mother of God to help him and then the miracle happened: Our Lady manifested and sent the dogs fleeing for the countryside. As a result of this miracle, on September 5th of the same year, the Marian image was sawed off the wall and transferred to a small church, dedicated to Saint Mary Magos that stood in the nearby estate called "La Falconiana". Five years later, on April 19, 1745, the image was brought back to its ancient seat, where in 1750 a church was erected and consecrated by Cardinal Charles Rezzonico, who later became Pope Clement XIII.

The second miracle took place in 1944, with Rome at risk of being destroyed by the war, on January 24, the image of the Virgin began moving to various churches within the city, taken lastly to Saint Ignatius Church on June 4, 1944. The Romans prayed for the liberation of their city and made a vow to the Virgin Mary to renew their lives, build a new shrine and perform charitable work in her honor. The Virgin granted the miracle and Rome was saved. On June 11, 1944, Pope Pius XII went to pray with the Romans and bestowed upon Our Lady of Divine Love the title "Salvatrice of the City".

After the war, the shrine reopened, cultural and apostolic charitable works were developed, and in 1975 the National Marian Youth Camps began. On May 1, 1979 Pope John Paul II visited the Shrine of Divine Love and named it "The Marian Shrine of Rome". He came back again on June 7, 1987 for the opening of the Marian Year and on July 4, 1999 for the consecration of the new shrine. Since 1983, on Palm Sunday and Good Friday, at 8:30pm the most spectacular sacred Roman representation of the Stations of the Cross, inspired by the Holy Shroud, takes place at the shrine. In the 1980's, much restoration work was done on the shrine and in 1991 the delicate restoration of the altar of the ancient and precious fresco of Our Lady of Divine Love was accomplished.

The Diocesan Synod opened (1986) and concluded (1993) in front of Our Lady of Divine Love in Saint Peter's Square, constituting the Roman Church's most authoritative event for absolution from the vow through spiritual renewal and growth in communion with the Church and its mission in the city and the world. On May 10, 1999 the mosaic of Our Lady of Divine Love was placed in the Vatican Gardens in front of the Tower of Saint John.



The mosaic depicting the miracle



The miraculous image of Our Lady of Divine Love



On June 4, 1944, the same day in which the novena of Our Lady of Divine Love ends, the fate of Rome was decided. Everything seemed to lead up to a bitter battle. The Germans, determined by a strong opposition, controlled the city and already undermined the bridges of the Tiber River to cover themselves for their eventual withdrawal. On the other side, allied General Harold George Alexander decided that his two thousand armored tanks would chase the enemy until the destruction of Rome.



In the meantime, Pius XII, wanted to personally participate in the prayer that he was worried not to leave the Vatican for fear of being deported. The vow was read instead by the parish chamberlain Father Greminigi, who would later become the Bishop of Novara. Almost at the same time, the opposition rank is revoked. The Germans leave the city and the allied troops make their entrance, by 7:45pm, without a fight. The deeply inspired miracle of the salvaging of Rome comes to fruition.



The old Shrine of Divine Love



The tower of the miracle at Leva Castle



In response to the invitation of Pius XII, the words of the Romans' vow to the Virgin were read at 6pm in the very crowded church on account of the city was spared the horrors of war. On the other hand, the faithful promised to correct their own moral conduct, make a new shrine and fulfill charitable works at the Leva Castle. The vow is expressed in very quickly because curfew would start at 7pm.



Interior of the new shrine. On July 4, 1980 Holy Father John Paul II solemnly consecrated the new shrine releasing the Romans from their vow on June 4, 1944.



Among the numerous charitable works, as promised by the Romans to Our Lady of Divine Love in order to escape bombardment, were the old folk's home and the House of Joy for needy children.