



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in LA VANG

VIETNAM, 1798

For much of the 18th century, the nation of Vietnam was involved in various domestic conflicts. One of the emperors who followed in that bloody period began a persecution against Catholics, giving the order to destroy all of the churches and seminaries and ordered punishments which varied from burning marks on their faces with branding irons to condemning them to death by the most cruel of methods. It is in the midst of this great suffering that Our Lady of La Vang came to the aid of the population of Vietnam: the first apparition occurred in August of 1798, then the Virgin Mary appeared again in 1934 to two pagan women.

In August of 1798 the associates of the young emperor Canh Thinh ordered the persecution of the Christians, who were accused of collaborating with the French who were present in Vietnam. The Christians took refuge in the forest of La Vang, located about 60 kilometers from Hue, incurring many risks represented by ferocious beasts, by hunger, and by illnesses. To sustain their courage, every day they gathered around a great tree and recited the Rosary in honor of the Virgin Mary.

In one of these nights, they were visited by the apparition of a most beautiful Lady who held a babe in her arms, and who was accompanied by two Angels: the people recognized the Lady as the Most Holy Virgin Mary. The Madonna gave a sign to those present: they were able to eat and feed themselves with the leaves of the trees of the jungle and she taught them to distinguish and how to use certain plants in the surrounding area as medicinals.

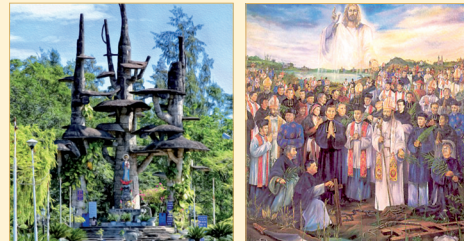
In particular, she proclaimed these words: **“Have trust, endure with a good heart the pains and sufferings. I have already heard your prayers. From now on all who come to this place to pray will see their wishes granted.”**

After this first apparition, the Virgin Mary continued to visit the people of that place numerous times during the period of the persecutions. Many of the Vietnamese Catholics that were captured and condemned to being burned alive because of their faith made the request to die precisely at the location of the apparitions.

Subsequently a church was constructed, established by Bishop Gaspar, and despite the relative isolated position between the high mountains, very many people have continued to penetrate the deep and dangerous jungle to venerate Our Lady of La Vang. The church was consecrated in a solemn ceremony to which nearly 12,000 people participated, and in which Our Lady of La Vang was proclaimed Patroness of the Vietnamese Catholics. In August of 1962, Pope John XXIII elevated the church of La Vang to a Basilica. In 1934, the Holy Virgin appeared again, this time to two women of the area, pagans, indicating to them a font of spring water where they were to immerse the ill son of one of the two seers, who indeed healed instantaneously.



Depiction of the Apparition of the Blessed Mother in La Vang



Exterior of the Basilica

On the 16th of June 1988 in Saint Peter's Square 117 Vietnamese Martyrs were canonized and Pope John Paul II pronounced in his Holy Mass these words: **“The Vietnamese martyrs by ‘sowing through their tears’ in reality they initiated a profound and liberating dialogue with the population and culture of their nation, proclaiming first of all the veracity and the universality of faith in God, proposing furthermore a hierarchy of values and duties particularly suited to the religious culture of the entire Oriental world. Under the guidance of the first Vietnamese catechism, they gave witness to the fact that it is necessary to worship a singular God as the one God who alone created heaven and earth. In opposition to the compulsory orders of the authorities regarding the practices of the faith, they affirmed their freedom of creed, sustaining with humble courage that the Christian religion was the only thing they could not abandon, since they could not disobey their supreme sovereign: the Lord.”**

This is that which remains of the old Basilica, destroyed during the war in 1972

An image of the “Regina Pacis” (Queen of Peace) of La Vang

