



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in FOGGIA



ITALY, 1001



The last week, and more precisely the last Saturday, of the month of April in the year 1001, the Count of Ariano Irpino, one of the lords of the region of Apulia, after a frenzied day of hunting, spent the night in a rustic cabin near the Cervaro stream in the wooded forest. In the middle of the night he was awakened, startled by the servants of some of his fellow hunters who invited him to flee with them, frightened by strange glowing blazes, seeming to be of a fire. The Count got up, he too surprised and terrorized, but rather than follow his friends in flight, courageously he preferred to ascertain the strange phenomenon, and with caution went toward the thicket from which emanated the blaze. With great astonishment, already near the place of the "fire," the Count realized that what he saw were not live flames, but strange flares of lights, like signals. Intrigued, he observed with attention and wonder as he caught sight of, in the middle of those flares, a most lovely Lady, of superhuman beauty, resplendent with a very vivid light who, turning her sweet gaze upon him, encouraged him and told him to not fear because She was the Mother of God. Then, pointing out to him a great tree, she let him see that on top of it was a statue of the Blessed Mother, with a darkened complexion, seated on a throne, and she added: **"I want that here appears a Shrine in my honor; without gold and precious ornaments. I will be the one to render it well-known by the many graces that I will bestow upon the devoted who will come to honor me."**

In that instant a peasant arrived at the same place, a certain Nicola, nicknamed 'Straccacappa' (ragged cape), who was going to do his daily work; he also saw the vision, and heard the words said to the Count by the Madonna. The beautiful and resplendent Lady meanwhile had vanished together with the luminous beams. The Count and the peasant, in fraternal enthusiasm embraced each other, united in the same sentiments, in the same felicity, and in the intention of building as quickly as possible a chapel in the location of the Apparition, near that oak tree which, amongst its dense branches, displayed the statue of Mary, enthroned, flanked by two Angels that held on her head a triple crown. It was possibly hidden up there by some devoted faithful followers in order to save her from destruction during the iconoclastic war. From that moment began many wonders in the woods of the Incoronata! The news of the miraculous event, in fact, spread in a very surprising way and the faithful, by the thousands and from all places, rushed to see, to honor, to beg the Blessed Mother, who—good and benign—granted favors and graces upon her children. At the same time a chapel was built and the statue of the Virgin, removed from the oak tree, was placed upon a more dignified throne. The incessant flow of numerous faithful led then to providing for the custody and care of the chapel. In the beginning, some custodians were voluntary hermits who loved to live out a solitary and penitent life in the woods. Following them were the Basilian Monks, then the Cistercians. Afterward various, and rather painful, secular destinies of the Shrine came to pass. Only in 1929, after the formal pact between the Holy See and the Italian State, the Incoronata returned under ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the Bishop of the time, Monsignor Fortunato Maria Farina, assisted by secular priests, who assumed total responsibility, until in 1950 it was permanently entrusted to the congregation of Don Orione. The unsafe walls were knocked down, and they restored both the church and the attached locales; they constructed a seminary, a center of spirituality, and ample spaces for pilgrims, rendering it a modern and furnished Shrine, elevated by Pope Paul VI on the 31st of May 1978 to the dignity of a Minor Basilica.



The portrayal of the apparition



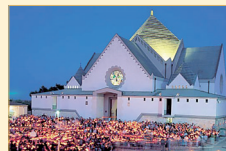
Antique painting which illustrates the apparition



Statue displayed on the altar of the crypt of the Shrine of the Crowned Mother of God in the Capitana of Foggia, dating back to the 19th century, in which is depicted the apparition of the Virgin Mary



Jewels donated as 'ex voto' to the Crowned Virgin of Foggia



The monumental complex of the Shrine of the Crowned Mother of God



Long is the list of notable visitors who over the centuries have come to the Crowned Mother of God to render her honor and to implore her graces. Among those to be remembered: St. Francis of Assisi, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Francis of Paola, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Bernardino of Siena, St. Alphonsus, and St. Gerard



Immediately after the apparition, in the place of the Virgin Mary appeared a statue of her. The shepherd, in a sign of gratitude, took the lamp in which he poured some oil to burn some light near the image. Miraculously the oil never ran out thus many pilgrims began to anoint themselves with that oil which performed numerous miracles. Still today inside the Shrine is kept a statue representing the shepherd with the lamp full of blessed oil in his hands with which the pilgrims continue to anoint themselves



Interior of the Shrine



Immediately after the apparition, in the place of the Virgin Mary appeared a statue of her. The shepherd, in a sign of gratitude, took the lamp in which he poured some oil to burn some light near the image. Miraculously the oil never ran out thus many pilgrims began to anoint themselves with that oil which performed numerous miracles. Still today inside the Shrine is kept a statue representing the shepherd with the lamp full of blessed oil in his hands with which the pilgrims continue to anoint themselves