



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

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary at ZARAGOZA

SPAIN, 40 A.D. and 1640



The apparition of "Our Lady of Pilar" was not formally recognized, but accepted from tradition and implicitly approved when in 1948 Pope Pius XII conferred upon the church the title of Basilica. According to tradition, on January 2nd in the year 40 A.D., the Apostle James the Greater proclaimed the Gospel around the area known in the present day as Zaragoza. Saint James was very discouraged because the preaching of the Gospel seemed to be a complete failure. In that year, the Blessed Mother is not yet assumed into Heaven and lives in Jerusalem. Mary appears miraculously to Saint James on a pilaster (in Spanish: pilar) sustained by Angels and that is venerated today in the Basilica of Zaragoza. From this Pilaster the name of "Our Lady of Pilar" is derived, in reference to the apparition. The Blessed Mother presents herself to the apostle while holding the Child Jesus and announces: "This place will be my house... and the people of this land will greatly honor my son Jesus". Saint James constructs, therefore, a chapel that in a short time becomes an important location for preaching and for the conversion of pagans. The chapel is progressively enlarged until it becomes the great Basilica that can be seen today. The column of jasper stone and the statue of wood are still visible today and many of the faithful go there on pilgrimage.

Numerous miracles are attributed to this place. The most well-known is about Miguel-Juan Pellicer. The man was born in 1617 in Calanda, a village about one hundred kilometers away from Zaragoza, to a family of poor peasants. At the age of 19, he decides to go far away, to work by his uncle. One day, during his work in the fields, he falls under a wagon and the wheels fracture his right leg. He decides to return to Zaragoza to ask for help from Our Lady of Pilar, where he confesses and receives the Eucharist. He is then admitted to the hospital where the doctors, ascertaining the condition of the gangrene, decide that the only way to save his life is the amputation of the leg. The limb is cut with a saw and chisel about the length of four fingers below his knee and cauterized with red-hot irons. The amputated limb is buried in the cemetery belonging to the hospital. From this moment Miguel-Juan, in order to survive, was forced to beg for handouts near the Shrine of the Virgin of Pilar. Every morning he participated in the Mass, he prayed with fervor in front of the Most Holy Sacrament, and he was habitual in anointing his mutilated leg with oil from the lamp that burned near the Tabernacle. After more than three years of absence from home, he decided to return to his family, which welcomed him with affection. In March of 1640, after a vigil in honor of the Virgin, Miguel-Juan, feeling himself very tired, went to bed earlier than usual and as always anointed the wound of his right leg with the oil from the lamp of the Most Holy Sacrament that was obtained in the Shrine of Our Lady of Pilar. When his mother had gone to check on her son to see if he was well, she discovered that from the blanket were showing not one but two feet. Miguel-Juan had miraculously regained the limb, buried three years previously. According to the testimonies of those present and of the canonical proceedings "the leg was pallid, smaller, and with reduced muscle mass, but it was perfectly alive and permitted walking."



Representation of the first apparition of the Blessed Mother to Saint James



Photograph of the Basilica of Zaragoza



Our Lady of Pilar is protectress of the Hispanic world, for this reason the flags of South American countries are also present in the Basilica



Detail of the miracle in which the Angel reattaches the leg to Miguel-Juan Pellicer



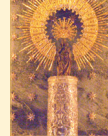
Pillar upon which Our Lady appeared to Saint James



Basilica, external sculpture of the miracle of Pilar



Representation of the miracle of the reattached leg



Statue of the Blessed Mother without a curtain



Chapel of Pilar