



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

Weeping of the Virgin Mary at SYRACUSE



ITALY, 1953

From August 29 to September 1, 1953, at the house of the Iannuso couple in Syracuse, tears flowed from a small plaster plaque depicting the Immaculate Heart of Mary, which were later determined to be of human type. On December 13, 1953, the Bishops' Conference of Sicily recognized the supernatural character of the weeping, confirmed by successive statements of Pope Pius XII (October 17, 1954) and of Pope John Paul II (November 6, 1994). The Marian image is currently preserved in the Shrine of the Weeping Madonna, inaugurated on November 6, 1994.

Angelo Iannuso and Antonina Lucia Giusti lived in Syracuse. Antonina was expecting her first child. She had a difficult pregnancy, with recurring diminutions of her sight: towards 3 AM night of August 29 her sight disappeared completely, but at 8:30 AM it returned and Antonina saw some tears falling on the face of a small plaster Madonna, placed at the head of her bed. The half bust of plaster, inserted into a small picture, depicted the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and was a gift received for their wedding, celebrated on March 21 of that year. The weeping repeated various times from August 29 to September 1 and news of it spread rapidly, and the Iannuso's house became a destination of unceasing pilgrimage. Initially the attitude of the Church was very prudent: the pastor, Father Giuseppe Bruno, with the permission of the Curia entrusted the phenomenon to a scientific commission, presided by Doctor Michele Cassola, an atheist. After the withdrawal of the lachrymal liquid, that marked also the end of the phenomenon, and after an examination of the small plaque, on September 9, 1953 the commission concluded that the tears were of human type and the phenomenon was not explainable scientifically. On December 13 of the same year, the Bishops' Conference of Sicily declared the authenticity of the lachrymation. The small plaque remained exposed to the veneration of the faithful in Euripide Square until 1968, before being preserved in the shrine that was built later.

On November 6, 1994, Pope John Paul II, on the occasion of his pastoral visit to the city of Syracuse, during the homily for the dedication of the Shrine of the Weeping Madonna, said among other things: "The tears of Mary belong to the realm of signs: they testify to the presence of the Mother in the Church and in the world. A mother weeps when she sees her own children threatened by evil; spiritual or physical. Shrine of the Weeping Madonna, you exist to remind the Church of the weeping of the Mother. May all those who are oppressed by the awareness of their sins come here within these welcoming walls and experience the richness of the mercy of God and of His forgiveness! May the tears of their Mother guide them here."



Photo taken during the weeping that occurred in 1953



The married couple Angelo Iannuso and Antonina Lucia Giusti



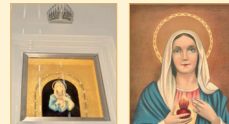
On October 17, 1954, Pope Pius XII said in a radio message: "Without doubt Mary is in Heaven eternally happy... but she does not remain insensitive, rather she always nourishes love and mercy for the suffering humankind, to whom she was given as Mother, since sorrowful and weeping she stood at the feet of the Cross, where her Son was hung. Will people understand the mysterious language of those tears? Does she weep again for the renewed wounds fanned in the mystical Body of Christ? Or does she weep for many children, in whom error and guilt have extinguished the life of grace, and who gravely offend the divine Majesty?..." (A.A.S. 46 (1954) 658-661).



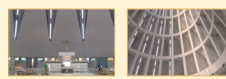
Among the first miracles that occurred through the intercession of the little Madonna of Syracuse there was the healing of Mrs. Anna Vassallo from a tumor and the healing of little Enza Memola from a paralysis



The Shrine of the Weeping Madonna of Syracuse was inaugurated by John Paul II on November 6, 1994



The small statue that wept in 1953 is kept in the upper part of the Shrine, near the main altar



Interior views of the Shrine



Reliquary where the tears of the little Madama of Syracuse are kept