



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

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in ASSISI



ITALY, 1216

One night in 1216, Saint Francis was visited by Christ and by the Most Holy Virgin Mary while he prayed at the *Portiuncola*: to them the Poor One asked that to each person, repented and confessed, who would visit that church, they would be pardoned completely for all their sins and the consequences of their sin. Subsequently, Saint Francis went to the Pope to ask for a Papal Bull in which would be noted all the conditions for the indulgence. The book *Franciscan Sources* narrates that one night in the year 1216, Saint Francis was immersed in prayer in the little church called the Portiuncola when suddenly from the altar an intense light was diffused: it was the Christ with His Most Holy Mother, encircled by a multitude of Angels. The Lord Jesus then asked him what he desired. The response of Francis was immediate: **“I pray that all who, being contrite and having confessed their sins, come to visit this church, will obtain ample and generous pardon, with a complete remission of all their sins.”** **“That which you ask, Oh Friar Francis, is a great favor – the Lord replied to him – but of greater things you are worthy and greater ones you will have. I therefore accept your request, but on the condition that you ask my Vicar on earth, on my behalf, this indulgence.”** Francis quickly presented himself to the Pontiff Honorius III who in those days was in Perugia and with candor told him of the vision he had. The Pope listened with attention and gave his approval, asking: **“For how many years do you want this indulgence?”** Francis immediately replied: **“Holy Father, I do not ask for years, but souls.”** Cheerful he headed towards the door, but the Pontiff called him back: **“How is it that you do not want a document?”** Francis replied: **“Holy Father, for me your word is enough! If this indulgence is the work of God, He will be sure to demonstrate His work. I have no need of any document: this paper must be the Most Holy Virgin Mary, Christ as the notary and the Angels as the witnesses.”** On the 2nd of August of that same year, many of the faithful went to the little church of the Portiuncola with the participation of seven Bishops from the region of Umbria. On that occasion it was Saint Francis himself who announced to the crowd of devotees present the extraordinary indulgence that he had obtained from the Pope. Saint Francis said amid tears of joy: **“Brothers and sisters of mine, I want to send all of you to Paradise!”** To understand the reason for the indulgences (Catechism of the Catholic Church, #1472-3), one must keep in mind that sin has a dual consequence. A grave mortal sin deprives us from communion with God and for this reason it renders us incapable of obtaining eternal life, the deprivation of which is called the “eternal suffering” of sin. Every sin, even venial, elicits a damaging attachment in human beings which is in need of purification, both in this life, and also after death, in the state called Purgatory. Such purification releases souls from the so-called “temporal punishment” of sin. A conversion, which derives from a fervent charity of heart, can bring about the total purification of a sinner, so that no further penalty subsists. [Council of Trent: DS 1712-1713; 1820]. The indulgence therefore is the remission of the temporal punishment before God for the sins which were already forgiven of guilt during the Sacrament of Confession. The indulgence is partial or plenary according to that which frees one’s soul partly or completely of the temporal punishment owed for the sins. Every faithful believer can earn for oneself, or for the deceased, either a partial or a plenary indulgence.



Painting that depicts the apparition



The Apparition of the Portiuncola



Statue of the Blessed Mother located above the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels where the little church of the Portiuncola is safeguarded. Around the year 1850 many people asserted to have seen the statue of the Virgin Mary come alive



View of the Basilica of Saint Mary of the Angels, Assisi



It is possible to earn the indulgence of the *Portiuncola* every day of the year, once per day, for oneself or for a deceased. From noon on the 1st of August until midnight on the 2nd of August of every year the same grace is extended to all the parochial churches and to all the Franciscan churches. The conditions to receive the plenary indulgence of the Pardon of Assisi (for oneself or for the dead) are: the Sacrament of Confession (within eight days before or after), receiving the Eucharistic Communion in the state of sanctifying grace; a visit to a Franciscan church or a parochial church, with the recitation of the Apostles’ Creed and of the Our Father; prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father; and having the disposition of one’s soul which excludes every attachment to sin



Interior of the Basilica



In the Manual of the Indulgences are found the rules to obtain the plenary indulgence of the Portiuncola. But the plenary indulgence may also be obtained every day even with the devoted reading of Sacred Scripture for at least 30 minutes a day, or with the recitation to church or in community of the Holy Rosary, or by praying the Way of the Cross in front of the stations, or with at least half an hour of Eucharistic Adoration as long as one does not have any attachment to sin and that all the other required conditions of the Church are fulfilled: sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayers for the intentions of the Pope (for example, an Our Father and a Hail Mary)



Interior of the Portiuncola