



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

# Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in BETTOLA



ITALY, 1496

**B**

ettola developed as a town precisely because the entire valley of the Nure river was recognized as a religious center after news spread that the Virgin appeared to a shepheress at the end of the year 1496. The numerous faithful flock quickly and pilgrimages are so imposing that, for reasons of public order, at the beginning of May, Ludovico Sforza, The Moor, Duke of Milan, asks for precise news from his commissary, Ambrogio Zanca, a resident in Piacenza. The reply from the commissary is from the 15th of May 1497, dated and stamped from Piacenza, and refers to twelve healings believed to be miraculous, which occurred in the Nure Valley between the 10th of April and the 4th of May, "...due to the image of Our Blessed Mother appearing in Val di Nura." The original document is preserved in the State Archive of Milan, in the ducal correspondence section.

Tradition bequeaths us, as a summary, the account of the apparition of the Blessed Mother. "It was about midday, the sheep were nibbling amongst the shrubs, and the shepherd girl was sitting in the shade of an oak tree. Suddenly there struck, between the branches of the oak tree, a light more vibrant than that of the sun: the young girl, surprised and fearful, raises her gaze and in that light she sees a woman of superhuman beauty who hugs a baby to her bosom and says to her: 'I am the Blessed Mother... you will tell the elders of the village that I desire a church to be built here in honor and glory of my Jesus.' The young girl ran to recount the vision and the order received by the celestial Lady, but the elders did not lend her credence. The young girl returns to the place of the apparition and again sees the Blessed Mother. She repeats the story of the miracle, showing her fingers lit like ardent candles. In that moment they then believed in the miraculous event and set about to construct the church." (R. Luconi).

Next to the little church a convent is also built; both are entrusted to the Franciscan Friars of the Third Order Regular. Instead, the faith of the people is great and it gives us some true works of art, as in the beautiful golden Statue of wood of the 15th century, the Banner of the Shrine, and the antique carving of 1754 illustrating the apparition. As the times improved, a new Shrine was built and consecrated on the 31st of May 1885.



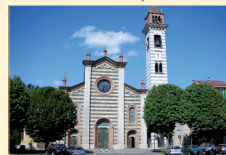
The devotion to Our Lady of the Oak Tree grows, favored also by interventions of the Popes. On the 12 of June 1962, Pope John XXIII, with the Papal Bull entitled "Luminis Stella" proclaims "the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Oak as Principal Celestial Patroness of the Nure Valley"



External view of the Chapel



Internal view of the Chapel



External view of the new Shrine



Process that depicts the apparition



Internal view of the new Shrine



Statue of the Blessed Mother carved in golden wood of the 15th century



Antique banner of the Shrine (17th century)