



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

# Apparition of the Virgin Mary in CUSSANIO



ITALY, 1521

The story of Cussanio is tightly linked to the apparition of the Blessed Mother and to the Shrine named for "Our Lady of Divine Providence." It all began, therefore, with the apparition of the Virgin Mary to the shepherd Bartolomeo Coppa in May of 1521. The Virgin healed the man, deaf and mute since birth, and entrusted him with the mission of preaching penitence in Fossano. She appeared to him a second time and offered him some bread after finding him famished, disillusioned, and derided by the people he met during his mission. It was in this century that the city of Fossano, troubled as most of the surrounding territories by wars and plagues, had turned to implore the Virgin to escape harm and erected a Chapel on the place of the Apparition of the Blessed Mother that had become in those years a pilgrimage destination.

According to tradition it was the 11th of May in 1521, when a poor cattleman by the name of Bartolomeo Coppa, a good man, deaf-mute since birth, was grazing his herd on the meadows where today the Shrine appears. Suddenly a Lady appeared to him, dressed in a pure white garment with a blue mantle: the Madonna! Bartolomeo heard sounds that he had never sensed before and he began to talk, the Virgin had miraculously cured him... she spoke to him, telling him that he had to try to convince his fellow townfolk to be more God-fearing and to dedicate themselves more fully to penitence in order to redeem themselves from their sins. The man went around his village to speak of what happened, the people of Fossano were astonished at his sudden healing but, obstinate as they were, they began to make fun of him and they did not put into practice the good actions that the Virgin had requested. Three days later, the poor cattleman was again pasturing his flock, he was tired and hunger tormented him, but no one gave him anything to eat; after a while he fell asleep, there in his sleep the Madonna appeared to him again, this time she was dressed in red with a blue mantle, she handed him three loaves of bread and advised him to bring her message to the inhabitants of Fossano. When he awakened he thought it was just a dream but he saw the three loaves materialized near his saddlebag and believed in the miracle that had just occurred. The good man went back to preaching to his fellow countrymen about the exhortation of the Blessed Mother but, like the previous time, no one heeded him.

Some time later a terrible pestilence diffused throughout the town which left behind dead people in every home. The Fossanesi then remembered the message that the poor cattleman had brought to them and they decided to go in a procession to the place of the apparitions. Immediately the plague ceased and in thanksgiving on the site a chapel was constructed which in time was transformed into the present day Shrine.



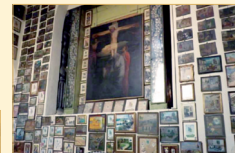
Inside the Shrine are preserved some valuable works of art among which several paintings of the 1600s by the Flemish painter, John Claret, the one most dear to the Fossanesi is placed above the high altar and depicts the miracle of the second apparition where the Virgin Mary appears in the act of giving the three loaves to Bartolomeo Coppa



Outside of the great Shrine of the Virgin Mary in Cussanio



Inside of the Shrine



Many are the "ex voto" objects offered for graces received, which testify to the profound and widespread faith of the people of Fossano



Image of the Virgin that appears to Bartolomeo Coppa



Ex voto - objects offered for graces received