



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

# Apparition of the Virgin Mary at SAN BARTOLOMEO AL MARE



ITALY, 1671

Besides the tradition linked to the ancient statue of Our Lady of the Oak, there are three documented apparitions pertaining to the history of the Shrine. A first apparition took place in July of 1608: the Virgin appeared from a window of the bell tower, built a few years earlier, but the details are not well known. A second apparition occurred on April 18, 1671: "On the night of April 3, 1671, Mr. Giacinto Peralto, 50 years old, after his work on the farm, called his wife because he was suddenly struck by an ischemia that had rendered his left arm paralyzed and numb. A few days later, on the 18th, the apparition took place. At Andora, a little before 12, he happened to see a woman dressed in deep blue who told him to entrust himself to Our Lady of the Oak and to go there without hesitation. The Lady pointed out that he had to do it as soon as possible. Thus the next day Giacinto headed to the Shrine, and during the Holy Communion his eyes clouded and he fainted to the ground. As soon as he recovered, he extended his arms with ease, he was healed!" Interesting is the fact that the Virgin Mary made him realize that **"when one has a commitment of great importance, one fulfills it as soon as possible"**. The Virgin appeared to him again on the following May 10, to ask him why he had suspended the construction of the chapel that he was building on the land of the apparition, with the help of the community of Rollo. The Bishop in fact, awaiting further judgments, had prohibited any manifestation of public devotion on the place of the apparition, encountering the deaf hostility of the inhabitants of the town who still continued in the work undertaken.

Bishop Gio Tommaso Pinelli and his vicar Mons. Guglielmo Abbo inquired on the authenticity of the apparitions, and also on the other nine documented healings in 1671 alone, whose testimonies are preserved in the archive of the Episcopal Curia. We wish to recall three of these healings: "Angelia Viale della Chiappa, affected three years earlier from a paralysis to her arm, thigh and leg, was placed on a burro between two baskets and accompanied to the Shrine of the Oak, where she was healed. Caterina Languasco of Oneglia, 15 years old, remained 'crippled' for seven years following a fall from a ladder; when she was accompanied to the Shrine of the Oak, she fell 'stunned' to the ground and when she woke up she felt healed. Carlo Francesco Viale di Diano Castello, 10 years old, was afflicted since birth by a fleshy hernia, large like an egg; after prayer novenas and pilgrimages of his parents to the Shrine of the Oak, the hernia disappeared". These events greatly increased the devotion to the Virgin and made famous the Shrine of the Oak in all western Liguria. Visible testimonies of it are the ancient and recent votive pictures, for the most part, of sailors who escaped shipwreck that in the past adorned the altar of the Virgin Mary.



Fresco depicting the apparition



At a very short distance from the sea, on a pleasant knoll covered by ancient olive trees, rises the renowned Shrine of Our Lady of the Oak, in the town of the same name, accessible by the Via Aurelia



Interior of the Shrine



At the end of the right nave of the Shrine, in a beautiful frame of multicolored marbles, stands out the Catalan Crucifix of the 1400s era. The history of this Crucifix is connected to the passing of a group of French pilgrims, probably a society of "flagellants", who stop to spend the night near the church of the Oak. The following morning upon entering into the church to take back the crucifix, they find it so firmly embedded in the floor and the ground, that they cannot move it. While they pray struggling to lift it, they hear the voice of Christ who says: "Where the Mother is, the Son can stay...". Thus the olive wood Crucifix remained in the church.



Our Lady of the Oak



The central nave



Frescoes in the interior of the Shrine



Panorama