



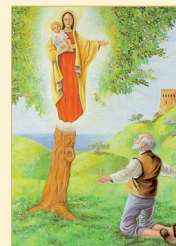
THE APPEALS
OF OUR LADY
APPARITIONS
AND
MARIAN SHRINES
IN THE WORLD

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in GIULIANOVA

ITALY, 1557

The Shrine appears in Giulianova, a small town with a thousand-year-old history on the confines of the region of Le Marche, from its beginning in antiquity (Castrum, 264 B.C.), which spreads itself partly into the lowland and partly into the hill. On the 22nd of April 1557 it pleased the Lord to give a sign of His divine goodness by making the Virgin of Splendor known to the people of Giulianova. This is how it is read in the first chronicle which the Prior, a priest called Fr. Pietro Capullo, had written and rewritten from 1657 to 1674.

On a little hill just beyond the walls of Giulianova, around mid-day, a pious peasant, weary from having gathered some firewood to carry to his home in Colonia, had gone to rest in the shade of a leafy olive tree. Bertolino, as the peasant was named, relaxed by the pleasant sea breeze that reached all the way up there, was about to fall into slumber when he saw in the branches of the tree a dazzling light and, in the center, the Virgin Mary who said to him: 'Come on, Bertolino, get up and go at once to Giulianova and spread throughout the whole town the happy tidings that the Great Mother of God has chosen her abode here. Advise the clergy to come without any delay, in a solemn procession to honor me, and that here, where you see me now, a Shrine is built for me.' Still dazed by the great emotion, but proud of the task he received, Bertolino ran to the governor (feudal administrator of the ducal office) to report to him the extraordinary message of the Blessed Mother. As it was predictable, the governor and several influential people present were amusing themselves very much by listening to the odd story of the peasant, but when he began to insist that they follow him to the place of the apparition, they lost their patience and threw him out in a rude manner, accusing him of being delusional and demented. Though believing in his good faith, the only plausible explanation was that either the first days of the hot summer or one glass of wine too many must have gone to his head. Very dejected from the rude treatment received, Bertolino returned home, but the following day, in the early morning, driven by an interior force, he again headed to the olive tree with the hope of seeing again the resplendent Lady in order to confide to her all his bitterness. The poor peasant climbed up the last part of the hill with his heart in his throat; he was feeling humiliated and offended not so much for the insults as for the failure of his important mission. And if, once on top of the hill, the Virgin Mary were to not make herself seen again to his eyes? Arrived in proximity of the tree, all of his fears vanished because the Madonna was there to attend to him, to encourage him and to exhort him to return to the governor. Unfortunately even the second delegation did not have better success than the first. On the third day, Bertolino returned to that place which was already so dear to him. He knelt and awaited the consoling apparition. The Virgin returned, and with sweetness and firmness urged him to insist to the governor that what he was asserting corresponded to truth. Without hesitating further, Bertolino returned to the city. Overflowing with renewed fervor, for the third time the pious peasant recounted all that the Great Mother of Jesus had just commanded him, insisting that everyone climb with him to the top of the hill to verify the veracity of his report. This time to the insults they added beatings. One of them, to better convince him to bring justice, began to beat him with violence, to the entertainment of those present. Of mild temperament, Bertolino would have been overpowered if the Blessed Mother did not intervene, liberating him from the hands of the inconsiderate man, who suddenly remained paralyzed and mute. An absolute silence fell in the meeting room: all understood to have been witnesses to a supernatural event and each one, in their own heart, beseeched pardon for the offenses caused to the harmless peasant. Confused and bewildered, the governor hastened to summon all the clergy and the people to go in solemn procession to the place indicated by Bertolino. The lumberjack, confident in the promises of the Madonna and with his heart brimming with joy, guided the procession from the ducal palace to the miraculous location where everyone was able to assist, struck by the fantastic vision, clear and distinct, of the Virgin Mary, resplendent amongst beams of dazzling light. But the Madonna had reserved for them a great gift as a tangible and eternal proof of the extraordinary occurrence: at the base of the olive tree she made gush forth a spring of pure and fresh water, of continual flow, that exists still today! The news of the apparition, which signaled the end of the plague that had stricken the entire region, but which had left unharmed the district of Giulianova, diffused like a flash throughout the land. An event this extraordinary attracted a multitude of people from everywhere to the place to see the miraculous olive tree, to bless themselves with the water from the font, and to prostrate themselves in adoration, invoking mercy, protection, and comfort. Carried by others, even Bertolino's aggressor went there, sincerely repented for the senseless gesture and precisely to him, Most Holy Mary of Splendor wished to grant the first grace, giving back to him, amidst the praises of all present, the use of his speech and movements.⁷



Near the Shrine of Our Lady of Splendor, in Giulianova, there is a well in which the water flows from the spring that the Blessed Mother made gush forth as a sign.



Shrine of Most Holy Mary of Splendor



Inside the Shrine



The portico of the Bessary



Miraculous font of water



Mosaics that adorn the spring which was made to gush forth by the Madonna