



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

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary at COTIGNAC



FRANCE, 1519-1637



On August 10, 1519, a woodcutter named Jean de la Baume went up to the top of Mount Verdaille. As usual, he began his day with some prayers, kneeling. As he was getting up, he saw a cloud in which there was the Virgin with Baby Jesus in her arms, Saint Joseph, the Archangel Saint Michael, and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Our Lady was resting her feet on a crescent moon. She gave the following message to Jean: "Go tell to the Consuls and to the clergy of Cotignac to build a chapel here dedicated to Our Lady of Graces and to come in procession to receive the graces that they want to obtain". The following day, in the same place, Jean again had the apparition and received the same request. The first stone of the Shrine was laid on September 14, 1519. On June 7, 1660, a young 22 year old shepherd of Cotignac, Gaspard Ricard, was looking after his flock of sheep on the eastern slopes of Mount Bessillon. The heat was oppressive and Gaspard was thirsty. Suddenly, he saw a man at his side, who pointed to him a rock saying: "I am Saint Joseph, lift this rock and you will be able to drink". Gaspard was doubtful since the rock seemed heavy. The apparition thus repeated his instructions. The shepherd obeyed, moved the rock without difficulty and found a spring there.

Our Lady of Cotignac performed numerous miracles, among these stands out the one that occurred in 1615, to two spouses who were unable to have children, none other than Louis XIII and Anne of Austria. The queen was praying a lot for this, but no pregnancy was going to a good end. It would have taken a miracle, which indeed occurred, after 22 years of marriage, through the intercession of Our Lady of Graces of Cotignac. On October 27, of 1637, while the king was praying with the friars, in the choir Brother Fiacre suddenly received an interior revelation: the queen would have to recite three novenas in her name to the Blessed Virgin, and only in this way a son would be given to her: the first novena to Our Lady of Graces, in Provence; the second to Notre-Dame of Paris, the cathedral, and the third to Our Lady of Victories, the church of his convent. However the religious superiors remained skeptical and prohibited Brother Fiacre to announce the occurrence, unless he presented a proof. Six days later, on November 3, towards two in the morning, the young friar was distracted from prayer by infant cries: he beheld the Virgin Mary, who showed him in her arms a crying baby and said to him: "Do not fear, I am the Mother of God and the baby you see is the Dauphin whom God wants to give to France". The vision disappeared to return later, but without uttering a word. Finally, two hours later, Mary appeared again, she was by herself, and said: "Do not doubt anymore, my boy, of what you said to your confessor. To prove that I desire the queen be invited to say three novenas in my honor, here is reproduced the same image that is found in the Church of Our Lady of Graces, in Provence, and the sketch of the church". The friar saw accurately the image and the choir where he was, as if it were a real scene. His superiors, who like him had never been there, were immediately informed. After having prudently consulted some friends who had gone there in pilgrimage they verified that the descriptions corresponded to what had been seen and recounted by the friar. The novenas ended on the following December 5, namely "nine months before the birth of the future King Louis XIV!"



Stained glass window illustrating the apparition of Our Lady to the woodcutter Jean de la Baume



Louis XIII and Anne of Austria: after years of prayer the Virgin Mary appears to a young friar to announce the birth of the Dauphin of France, the future King Louis XIV



The small Abbey of Cotignac in Provence



Miraculous spring



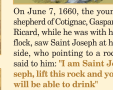
Interior of the Shrine



Votive offerings



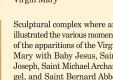
Vision of the friar to whom Our Lady announces the birth of the dauphin of France



Votive altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary



King Louis XIV thanks the Virgin Mary for the grace granted to his parents



Sculptural complex where are illustrated the various moments of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus, Saint Joseph, Saint Michael Archangel, and Saint Bernard Abbot