



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in BECHWAT

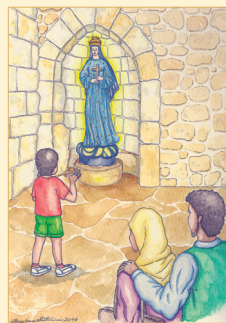
LEBANON, 2004

“**P**ray my children, soon God will hear your prayers. My Son is merciful”. This is the message that was read by the three children present during the apparitions of the Virgin Mary that took place in Pontmain, France in 1871. A few days later the signature of the armistice with Prussia arrived and as Our Lady promised, the citizens of Pontmain were spared a war. In 1904, a statue similar to the one from Pontmain was sent to Lebanon, to the small city of Bechwat, near the Valley of Bekaa. This small village has about 500 residents, spread throughout the mountains where the cedar trees come from, and since August 15, 2004, it has become very famous.

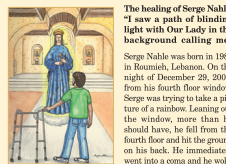
In fact, the statue of the Virgin Mary dressed in blue and studded with golden stars (that represent the vault of the sky), with a cross in one hand and a crown of gold, she gives a “special sign” to pilgrims. A married Muslim couple of Jordanian descent, with their nine year old son, Muhammad al-Hawadi and a friend went to pray before the statue of Our Lady of Bechwat, when suddenly the boy started to scream: **“Mommy, the statue looked and smiled at me!”** Muhammad saw her move with his own eyes: the dress of the Virgin began to move and flutter lightly, then the Virgin moved towards him and looked at him sweetly in the eyes and blessed him with the sign of the cross. The friend of the father, a Maronite Catholic, told the little boy that the statue was not moving and smiling. However, the little boy, surprised that the friend did not see the same thing he did started to pray in a very special way saying: **“Greetings to you, oh Virgin Mary, Queen of the world, of peace and love. The elderly, the children, and the women and men kneel before you in the world. Bring peace, love and freedom onto the face of the Earth, oh Queen of the world”**.

Surprised by the behavior of the little boy, both parents got closer to the statue and saw that it was breathing and the beads of the rosary that she had in her hands were moving.

That same evening and throughout the following days, many faithful saw the statue exude perfumed oil and someone saw her move her eyes. Many healings and miracles were noted. The news spread and the influx of pilgrims was enormous. The miraculous statue of the Virgin became famous amongst the Orthodox and the Muslims that started to flow in great numbers to give homage to the Virgin Mary of Bechwat. The Shrine of Our Lady of Bechwat has become the most important Middle Eastern shrine, a bit like the Lourdes of the East.



A drawing of the apparition



Our Lady of Bechwat



Our Lady of Lebanon, protector of the Lebanese people



A panoramic view of the Shrine



The Shrine

Unfortunately the fall left him semi-paralyzed and for this he had to use a wheelchair. Towards the end of 2004, he was at the table with his family talking about the miracles that were happening near Our Lady of Bechwat. He decided to go visit Her. On August 19, 2004, after great effort, he reached the Shrine, with the help of faith, hope and his wheelchair. He confessed his pain and his suffering lovingly to the Virgin Mary. For a few moments, he seemed to see the statue of Mary animate. It seemed like the Virgin Mary was looking at him directly in his eyes moving the cross that she had in her hands. Serge kept it to himself and did not say anything. After he left the Shrine, he was by the car and he heard his main son, “Serge, you did not feel anything?” “Yes” he replied getting into the car without the wheelchair. Suddenly he saw before him a path of blinding light with the Virgin Mary in the background calling him: “Come to me Serge”. He realized then that he could walk again and filled with happiness he started to run as fast as possible to Our Lady of Bechwat to thank Her



The inside of the Shrine



A stained-glass window that depicts the apparitions of the Virgin Mary that happened in Pontmain, France in 1871