

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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in OCOTLÁN



MEXICO, 1541

In the year 1541, a terrible epidemic of the plague devastated villages in the region of Ocotlán, Mexico. One day, Juan Diego Bernardino, a young devout native who worked with the religious and took care of the sick, ascending the eastern incline of the Hill of San Lorenzo (Saint Lawrence), he entered into a forest of pine trees (ocotes) that was found near a cliff. Suddenly, the Most Holy Virgin appeared to him and said with an elegant courtesy: "May God save you, my son. Where are you going?" Juan Diego was very much surprised, but also very happy, for that encounter. He was very devoted to the Virgin and he concerned himself with ensuring that her altar was always overflowing with flowers. He managed to say: "I bring water from the river to the sick who continue to die without likelihood of surviving." The Mother of God invited him to follow her: "Come with me and I will give you another water that will bring an end to the contagion and will permit the healing of not only your ill ones, but whomever drinks it; because my heart, always ready to help the sick, cannot endure seeing so many calamities without doing anything to give you remediation". Juan Diego, who knew the area well, had never seen any springs of water in those parts, but he humbly followed Our Lady up to a narrow valley where she showed him the fount of Holy Water. "Take all the water that you wish, and rest assured that upon contact with even the smallest drop, the sick will not only feel relief, but they will be completely cured." Juan Diego Bernardino, obedient, filled his amphora container with the miraculous water and continued on toward his native village of Xiloxoctla. Once there, he gave the water to those afflicted by the plague and they all healed quickly. Knowledge of this event spread rapidly and many people came to the village in search of cures and to hear the testimony of the apparition of the *Zoapilán* (Lady), the Virgin Mary. The Virgin had said to Juan Diego: "Order the religious leaders on my behalf to put an image of mine in this town so that through it I may grant my graces and my mercy: I desire that it be placed in the chapel of San Lorenzo." The religious discussed that which Juan Diego had said and they went personally to the site in which these events took place. They arrived when night had already fallen and they were surprised by the phenomenon that they found themselves admiring: the trees were ardent - seemingly on fire - in the middle of very high flames without being burned. From here derives the name of **Ocotlán**, which is the union of two words of the Nahuatl language: "ocotl" (pine) and "tlatlá" (burn). That is Ocotlán, the pine tree that burns. The attention of those present was attracted in particular to a great pine tree upon which they placed a sign of recognition before returning to the convent. The following day, they returned and, with a hatchet, opened the pine tree indicated. With great surprise they discovered that the heart of the tree was made up of a beautiful wooden statue that represented the Immaculate Virgin Mary. The festive crowd, together with the religious figures, transported the image on their shoulders to the chapel of San Lorenzo, about 500 meters higher in altitude, at the top of the hill. The image was placed on the throne occupied by Saint Lawrence the Martyr. It is reported that the sacristan, angry for the fact that they had moved Saint Lawrence, twice removed the statue of the Virgin Mary from the throne to put Saint Lawrence back there. And each time, during the night, someone put the Virgin back on the throne. The sacristan then took the Virgin for a third time and restored Saint Lawrence back in his place; this time he put the image in a chest upon which he lied down to sleep, in order to avoid that the statue might be put back on the throne. His astonishment was immense when he saw the Angels themselves take the Queen and bring her back on the throne in a miraculous manner. The Virgin wanted to remain with her children, and it is certain that Saint Lawrence, like all the Saints, was happy to give up the spot to which he was entitled for the fact that she is the Mother of God. Later on, the chapel of San Lorenzo was replaced by the very elegant Basilica of Our Lady of Ocotlán. The foundation of the current basilica was set on the 13th of January of 1687. From there, the Mother continued to receive her children to help them enter into the heart of Jesus and of His Church.



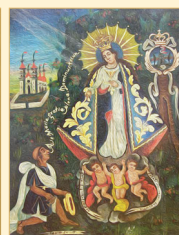
The three promises of the Virgin Mary of Ocotlán:

1. "Come with me and I will give you another water that will bring an end to the contagion; the sick will not only feel relief, but they will be completely cured." The Virgin recalls the words of Jesus spoken to the Samaritan woman at the well. The water to which the Virgin refers is the same. Jesus is the living water who gives us eternal life. In the Gospel of Saint John, chapter 4, verse 14, we read: "That whoever drinks of the water that I will give, will thirst no more, but rather, the water that I will give him shall become in him a fount of water that will gush forth eternal life." The water that we obtain from the miraculous well is a sign of the Baptism with which we become living members of Christ and we enter into becoming a part of His Church. For this, it is essential that we open our hearts with faith in order to live out our Baptism to the fullest.

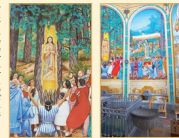
2. "My heart cannot endure seeing so many calamities without doing anything to give you remediation."

In many apparitions the Virgin manifests her sorrow as a mother whose son suffers sick and only in this Holy Mother does all in their soul because of their state of being sinners. She is seen crying for them. In the Shrine and in the Shrine. The Virgin collaborates in the work of redemption with her Son. She provides us to reflect and ponder: "Why do you Virgin cry?"

3. "They shall place an image of mine in this town to represent my perfection and also so that through it I may grant my graces and my mercy." The Virgin Mary is immaculate, that is - without any stain of sin. In her all the virtues are present to the height of perfection. Whomever draws near to her receives the grace necessary for sanctification. This is what occurred to Elizabeth and in the child she carried in her womb, Saint John the Baptist (Luke 1: 43): "As soon as Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leapt in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit"



Ontario painting that portrays the moment of the apparition in which the Virgin Mary makes flow a fount of miraculous water that will heal very many plagues/pestilences of people.



From that depicts the miracle.



Fountain of water from which may be drawn the miraculous water.



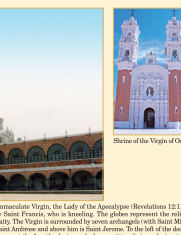
Interior of the Shrine altar which shields the Holy Statue of the Virgin of Ocotlán



The ornate cupola of the chapel. It certainly merits a visit, full of religious works of art, with the cloister porch of access to the Most Holy Virgin. On its dome are represented the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ with His Apostles and the Saints



View of pictures in honor of the Virgin of Ocotlán



Statue of the Virgin of Ocotlán



Procession in honor of the Virgin of Ocotlán



The miraculous statue dissolved into a tree

In the central part of the facade there is a statue of the Immaculate Virgin, the Lady of the Apocalypse (Revelations 12:1). The Virgin appears for the first time surrounded by twelve angels, who in kneeling, the gloves represent the religious Orders: the Poor Clares, and the Third Order of the Lady. The Virgin is surrounded by seven archangels: with Saint Michael at the top. To the right of the principal doorway is found Saint Andrew and above him is Saint Jerome. To the left of the doorway is Saint Augustine with Saint Gregory above him. They represent the four theologians who have written their works inspired by the Virgin. The 12 Apostles are represented by a group of trees in each column, to symbolize the fact that they are pillars of the Church. Upon the dome many fruits are represented: Jesus is the fruit of the womb of Most Holy Mary and all those who enter are called to receive many spiritual fruits.