



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

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary at SAVONA



ITALY, 1536

In 1536 the Virgin Mary appeared at Savona two times to the young farmer Antonio Botta on March 18 and on April 8. The chronicles of the time describe him as a man of deep faith, devoted to prayer and to charity towards his neighbor, with a profound and filial devotion to the Virgin Mary, whom he honored with the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary.

On that Saturday morning Antonio Botta had gone into his vineyard to tie the branches that were already pruned, but remembering that the vineyard of one of his relatives had not been pruned yet, he started to go there to perform this act of charity. Along the way he was praying the Rosary, when he reached a stream of rushing water in the valley of Letimbro, Antonio bent down to wash his hands and with great astonishment he saw the heavenly Lady who asked him to tell the people of Savona to honor Good Friday and to fast for three consecutive Saturdays, holding processions of reparation. These were her exact words: "...Because if it were not for those few prayers and good works that are performed by the confraternities and by other servants of God, the world would be more troubled than it is now; therefore tell all the people to amend from iniquities, letting go vices and sins, because my Son is very angered at the world for the great evils that are presently widespread in it and if they will not do that, their life will be short".

The second apparition of Our Lady occurred, as she promised, on the fourth Saturday from the first event, on April 8 of 1536, the vigil of Palm Sunday. The Virgin appeared again to Antonio Botta after the prayer, with the same dazzling light and at the exact spot of the first apparition; the farmer remembers her with hands extended towards the ground and opened in a gesture of mercy. Once again the Virgin Mary asked the ancient town for three Saturdays of fasting and a new procession carried out by the people and in a special way by the penitential confraternities. In the message delivered by Mary, as popular tradition recounts, she praised the good actions of those confraternities in the work of spreading the Word of God and exhorted Antonio and his fellow citizens to follow the religious doctrine. Our Lady ended her divine message and disappeared with these words of blessing: "**I desire mercy and not justice**". In honor of the apparitions, a Shrine was built under the title of Our Lady of Mercy.

Many miracles soon confirmed the authenticity of the apparitions. From time to time, among the crowd filling the valley, a cry was lifted: "**Mercy, Mercy!**". It was a blind man who had reacquired his sight, a crippled man who started walking, and a sick man healed. The Abbot, who lived those days of great enthusiasm, wrote that those healed from physical infirmities were so numerous, that ten days would not be enough for recording all of them. One miracle particularly moved the entire city: two children of Carrù, 21-month old Giovanni Guglielmo Burgosio, and 7-year old Maddalena Tasca, blind since birth, came to implore a miracle. They prayed for a long time kneeling on the ground, with their little hands joined, and when, almost disappointed, they were on the way back, the eyes of the two children were opened to the light and they saw for the first time the sky and the mountains, the stones of the path and the astonished faces of their parents crying for joy.



Painting depicting the apparition to Antonio Botta



Antonio Botta, after the apparition devoted his time to the home for elderly built next to the Shrine, bringing there the gifts that he received and asking for alms to support it



On July 12, 1536 the City Council of Savona approved the construction of a Shrine on the place of the apparition, with an adjoining home for the poor and sick



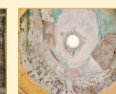
Interior of the Shrine



Detail of the dome



Crypt



Chapel of the Little Cross



Votive offerings for graces received