



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in TIRANO



ITALY, 1504

The Shrine of Tirano arose exactly on September 29, 1504, on the Feast Day of Saint Michael, the Virgin Mary appeared to the nobleman, Mario Omodei, greeting him with the words: "Goodness you shall have" and asking him explicitly to build a temple in her honor with the promise of spiritual and bodily health to whomever invokes her. The people of Valtellina are very devoted to Our Lady who always has favored them with healings, resurrections of still born babies, protection during plague and famine. Under her vigilant watch, Lutherans, Calvinists and esoteric practices, particularly widespread in these lands, have found an impregnable defense in Our Lady. Even today in Tirano everyone speaks of her stories, local tour guides, and street signs. Every day a red train crosses the city, and stops at a district called "Madonna", taking hundreds of devotees to their destination. Then it continues to Switzerland.

During the fifty years following the apparitions there have been lineages of people kneeling before the statue, simple people and pilgrims of high rank: kings and queens, emperors and ambassadors, Princes of the Church and saints. Cardinal Agnelo Roncalli, who later became Pope John XXIII and Cardinal Giovanni Battista Montini, who later became Pope Paul VI, often made stops there during their summer vacations. When Our Lady decided to visit Valtellina, plague, great poverty and general disorientation brought hardship to the inhabitants of the valley: the Duke of Milan, to which this land belonged, was already in the hands of Luis XII of France, who had oppressed the people by way of taxes. There were also the Graubinden ("the Greys") of southern Switzerland, ready to come down and seize the valley of Adda. They had already done so in 1486, when Chiavenna, not too far from Tirano, was burnt to the ground. At the first sign of dawn on Sunday, September 29, 1504, on the feast day of Saint Michael the Archangel, a young man of noble family, Mario Omodei, was going towards the vineyard to collect some fruit when suddenly he felt himself being lifted from the ground and transported with sweetness to a little orchard not too far from home. The little orchard was right outside the village of Tirano, protected then by walls, erected by Ludwig the Moor, near the Folla Bridge of the Poschiavino River. Terrorized by what was happening, Mario found himself in front of a young lady, of about fourteen or fifteen years, of extraordinary beauty and soft perfume. She started to speak to him in an affectionate tone: "Mario, Mario!" He responded: "Well, Our Lady" with great fear. The Virgin replied: "Goodness you shall have. Know that I am the Glorious Virgin Mary, do not be afraid". Almost an exact chronicle in dialect from the Book of Miracles, a precious manuscript compiled by an anonymous author between 1505 and 1519. "Know, that during this year, came a great mortality of man and beast" and the Virgin continued "there will be more

and they will be worse, if a church in my honor is not constructed on this site; and everyone that visits this holy and blessed place, giving a good and holy offering, according to their personal means, will be freed and saved from this plague and mortality". Dazed by what was happening, the boy fell to his knees. Mary ordered him: "Go everywhere you can to publicize this apparition and miracle."

Mario obeyed immediately. He rushed back to the city to tell the event to Knight Luigi Quadrio, one of the highest authorities of the valley, the man that six years earlier had attempted to defend the land from invaders. He was also the owner of the orchard where Our Lady appeared. The rich knight immediately donated a strip of land for the construction of the church. The golden life that nobleman Maria Omodei had lived so far, radically changed: the young man left Tirano in order to fulfill the wish of the Virgin Mary, in which she asked him to go from place to place, as far as his strength could take him, to ask for money to build a shrine. Many sources and documents note his numerous trips. He died in Trento, while he was collecting donations. Our Lady compensated him: in addition to saving his brother, who was struck by the plague, she saved his son from a very grave illness. His son then also received the gift of priesthood which he carried out right there in the Shrine of Tirano.

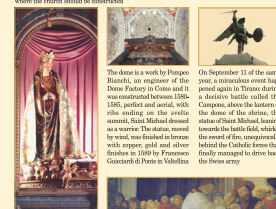
In consideration of the heavenly "contract", notable people and common people, in a climate of great joy, began to collect money to construct the shrine just eleven days after the miracle. On behalf of the diocesan administration of Como the adoration and construction of a provisional chapel was authorized. In the meantime the news of the apparition spread quickly and people began to rush into the valley, from the regions of Lario, Bresciano and Bergamasco and also from Tirol and Bavaria. On March 25, 1505 the foundation was set and the first stones of the basilica were laid in place. On the wall of the left nave of the basilica, nine years after the apparition, an unknown painter created a simple depiction of the Virgin pointing with her right hand indicating to a young man exactly where to build a church in her honor. The graces were arriving in abundance to Tirano: the plagues disappeared. However, the most moving aspect was the particular partiality that Mary demonstrated to stillborn babies. One of these miracles has been narrated through an image on a cloth on display in the basilica, where the resurrection of two little twins of Christian Peterferl from Bressanone and Giovanni Rodio from Innsbruck, took place on March 24 or 25 in 1505. Among the crowd of eye witnesses, was Luigi Quadrio who was acting as godfather, as the mother nursed her baby back to life, while the other baby miraculously received baptism.



A fresco from 1513 that depicts the apparition in which the Virgin Mary herself points to the place where the church should be constructed.



View of the shrine



The wooden icon of the Shrine of the Apparition of Our Lady of Tirano is one of the most beautiful that has ever been seen: on her head shines a golden crown. Pope Alexander VIII visited the capital of Saint Peter to even her identity. The miracle of milk and gold that wrings her shoulders is an offering from the people of Valtellina gifted during the rage of the plague in 1746.



Inside the sanctuary



Painting of the miracle of the resurrection of the two little twins of Tirano, which occurred on March 24, 1505, painted by Cipriano Vicini di Grosio in 1576.



In the church innumerable offerings are held in testimony to the many graces received. Despite the passage of the centuries after centuries, the Virgin Mary has left other facts, occurrences of illnesses cured and illnesses disappeared and a multitude of photographs of people of every age, above all children.