



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

# Apparition of the Virgin Mary at GHISALBA



ITALY, 1453



At Ghisalba there is a beautiful Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of Consolation and built in honor of an apparition of the Virgin Mary that took place in 1453. Lady Antoniola was the fortunate person to whom the maternal care of the Virgin Mary was bestowed. Very devout to Our Lady, she knelt in front of a painting depicting the Assumption of Mary to implore, just on the vigil of the Feast of Mary's Assumption into Heaven, her most powerful protection for herself already at the sunset of her life (tradition tells us that she was 60 years old) and for her country, shaken by political factions, struck by a terrible pestilence that still continued from 1450, and starving due to the ruin of the harvest completely destroyed. In that oppressive 1453, the pious Antoniola went early in the morning to the fields of the locality "Muradelli" not far from the town of Ghisalba. It was the vigil of the solemn Feast of the Assumption, a solemnity that the Church and popular devotion had always considered important. Towards 9 AM, she had knelt in front of the ancient image of the Assumption of Mary painted centuries earlier, in the apse of the old little church. After she finished praying, the elderly Antoniola sat to eat her meager breakfast she had with herself - water, some bread, and a knife to slice it. Suddenly the Blessed Virgin appeared and said to her: **"I want that you tell to the men and the women of Ghisalba that they build a chapel in this specific place in honor of God and in my honor..."**. Never was a command of Our Lady so mandatory, clear and precise. It is important to point out that the order of construction of the church in that place is given to the men and the women of Ghisalba, without distinction of gender, of social class, culture, wealth and political membership. Rarely the Blessed Virgin requires the inhabitants of a place to build a shrine dedicated to her. At Ghisalba the Virgin has imparted a precise order: **"To build a Church to God and in her honor"**. It is not easy to understand for which reason the Virgin has chosen the locality "Muradelli" of Ghisalba for her apparition. In the XV Century Ghisalba was in complete decay; besides the general impoverishment, there was also a decline of faith, a scarce religious practice. As God has looked upon "the humility of his handmaid" in the same way the Virgin Mary looked upon the misery and the sorrow of the inhabitants of Ghisalba and the nearby towns, deciding to come into their midst to bring comfort and strength in the faith. But appearing at Ghisalba Mary has accomplished a most unusual miracle, unique in its kind: so that the inhabitants of this town would believe the poor Antoniola, she stuck the knife in her throat: **"...In order that they may believe you, I will give you a sign, I will stick a knife in your throat in such a manner that no one will be able to remove it until they will resolve to build the said chapel"**.

The request was immediately fulfilled and Antoniola was freed from the knife without any consequence or pain. They also arranged the creation of a "crypt" to show to the devotees the precise place where the Blessed Virgin Mary had rested her feet. Still today the shrine is a destination of pilgrimages and numerous are the votive offerings testifying to the ongoing miracles through which the Virgin Mary continues to support the faithful who turn to her.



Painting illustrating the apparition. Here it is seen how Antoniola had the knife stuck in her throat.



The Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation



Interior of the Shrine



The Shrine of Our Lady of Consolation



Statues depicting the apparition



Series of votive offerings