



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

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in TURIN



ITALY, 1918

F

lora Manfrinati, a current "Venerable" who died in the odor of sanctity on the 12th of March 1954, dedicated her entire, albeit brief, life to increasing her knowledge of and love for Christ. A love continuously strengthened through her devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, invoked and introduced to everyone as "Our Lady of the Universe." It was the Madonna herself to suggest the invocation: "**Our Lady of the Universe, protect the Vatican and through the Vatican, protect the world.**" Furthermore, the Blessed Mother reminds Flora: "**Fear the land of exile, seek refuge under my mantle.**" In 1918, the Virgin appeared to Flora Manfrinati (1907-1954) while she was receiving her First Holy Communion and healed her of the serious illness that afflicted her. The Madonna appeared to her also on other occasions, inspiring her to establish the Work of the Educator Apostles and telling her in particular: "**Fight against the enemy of the world; the Devil prepares his army, and I my multitudes of Angels.**" The image of the Blessed Mother, as she appears on the canvas depicted by a painter friend upon her specifications, presents herself full of loving sweetness, wrapped in a mantle that shines bright white on a background of faint azure blue tinged with heavenly light. At the feet of the Virgin is the Vatican, and under the Vatican is the world. It is noted: a world noticeably enveloped in thick dark clouds, such that this image of the earth is not rendered quite "clear" to the eyes. The protection of Our Lady, both over the Vatican and the world, is well-characterized by the very ample mantle, which the Madonna's extended arms spread out, as if to wrap everything under her maternal mercy. The image in its entirety presents itself in a surprisingly "new" way and creates a sense of comfort and security in whomever sees it. At the conclusion, the Madonna transmits through Flora the following message of hope: "**Each time that someone's eye rests upon my image, my blessing will be received.**" Our Lady also tells her that with the name of Lady she wanted to include all of the titles with which she was invoked: "**I am the Lady of the Dawn. The world and men have fallen in the dark of night. I am the sunrise of a morning that will emerge to illuminate the way for men and bring them to the dawn of the true light...**" And even: "**Being the Mother of all, I desire to embrace the prayers that each of my children knows how to offer me spontaneously, and to accept from the poor ignorant one the simple desire to love me. I do not want a special prayer, I desire that everyone says with their own heart that which they would feel like saying in that moment to their own Mother who can grant everything... I am the Queen of Heaven and Earth, but at the same time I am the merciful Mother of every mortal being. I will leave to my children all the possibility and the time to convert themselves, but woe to those who resist! I am the Pilgrim Mother, that in the whole world I go in search of hearts and of souls, whomever will wish to truly repudiate me will find me an empress and will bend to the earth their knees... To me is given the power to fight and to win ... and after this battle, fervor will be renewed. You do not ask me what it means, the Rosary that cinches my sides? It means that all those who frequently recite this prayer form a sash which unites them to me. And this is the hour of the Universal Virgin. And the hour of open battle with the enemy of the Church, but have faith and be strong. Everywhere it is said that the hour of the Chastisement has come, but I want to say also to everyone that it is the hour of extreme love and mercy."**

In the course of her life Flora was animated by physical sufferings and exceptional morals, by profound charity, by overwhelming faith, by humility, by concealment, by heroic Christian strength, by continuous activity in the ordinary life and by apostolate. She had neither teachers nor school, no instruction of this world, but was "extremely wise about the things of God and most skillful in the activities of man." She intuited the importance of the instruction and formation of women. She instituted, with modern criteria, nursery schools to come to the aid of working mothers. She promoted the societal and professional formation of young ladies, concerning themselves with their arrangement and insertion into the world of work. In a thousand ways she helped parents, young people, the needy, sick, poor, sinners, priests, nuns, entire families in difficulty, and many religious institutions, giving all of herself to everyone without ever asking for anything in return. In her spirituality, the Venerable Flora was very united to the Eucharist and in her writings one reads: "**In thoughts we unite ourselves to the Baby Jesus, in desires to the Eucharistic Jesus, in suffering to the Crucified Jesus. The Most Holy Communion Host is the center of our gazes, the Eucharist is the center of our affections, the Cross is the center of our meditations, so that every sacrifice made in doing good is no longer a surprise or an anxiety... Feed yourselves well on the Bread of the Angels, so you can walk strong in the world of the weak."**



This is the canvas that the visionary had painted following the orders of the Virgin Mary who presented herself with the title of "Our Lady of the Universe." A visionary that the Madonna had told her: "Fear the land of exile, seek refuge under my mantle" ... "Each time that someone's eye rests upon my image, my blessing will be received." She also asked her to recite this prayer: "Our Lady of the Universe, protect the Vatican and through the Vatican, protect the world."



Nocturnal view of the Vatican



Pope John Paul II receives as a gift the painting of Our Lady of the Universe, brought by Lina Prosa



The Venerable Flora Manfrinati



Flora Manfrinati was born in Mattarello Nuovo—Trevigolo, in the province of Ferrara, in 1906 and died in Turin in 1954. This is her birth home, now transformed into a center of spirituality



Lina Prosa, who with Flora, founded many works among children under the age of 3 years old, in order to help working mothers in difficulty



Photo of some schools and centers founded by Flora for the youth