



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in ROVERANO



ITALY, 1350

The verdant meadows of the Roverano hill formed an optimum pasture for the herd of the shepherds of the area. Two poor shepherd girls would regularly go there, both very devoted to the Virgin, one of whom was mute since birth. One day, while they were resting at the foot of an olive tree, suddenly a beautiful lady dressed in azure blue appeared to them. It was the Most Holy Virgin who with maternal tenderness calmed the nervous young shepherdesses and then, addressing the mute one, she said: **“Go, o young shepherd girl, and call the Pastor of L’Ago and tell him to come here.”** The girl, mute until that moment, suddenly spoke and replied: **“I will go.”** And so she went to the pastor and told him in detail of the phenomenon. The priest, very moved, gathered the population of L’Ago and went to Roverano. Having arrived at the place of the Apparition, everyone hoped to see the Blessed Mother, but the vision had disappeared. Meanwhile, a third miracle was observed: from the high point of an olive tree hung a wooden frame with an image of the Virgin. After having paused in prayer, the parish priest ordered transport of the painting to L’Ago. The next day, when all of the Laghesi people gathered in church to venerate the wondrous image, it had vanished. Since all of the searches were in vain, it was thought to go back to Roverano at the place of the Apparition: the picture was again hung on the olive tree. It was understood then that the Virgin Mary wished to live on the Roverano hill. Regarding the nature of the image one can say that it is a beautiful painting on wood in the italo-byzantine school, of approximately 80x70 centimeters; it depicts the Blessed Mother with the Child Jesus in her arms while in the act of giving a blessing. While the people of L’Ago were working on the construction of a chapel on the Roverano, the canvas was temporarily shielded under the roof of a small outdoor stand. With the passing of the years the devotion to the Blessed Mother increased and, quite quickly, the little chapel could no longer contain the numerous faithful; the construction of a great Shrine was then rendered necessary, one that was able to be brought about thanks to the generosity of the people of L’Ago and the nearby towns. It was the 13th of June 1875 when the miraculous painting was established above the present day High Altar of the new Shrine. One particular characteristic of the Shrine of Roverano is that a miracle repeats itself from the time of the apparition, and which is in the flowering of the olive trees on the vigil of the Nativity of Mary. The exceptional phenomenon occurs every year on the 8th of September after the religious services in honor of the Blessed Virgin and it is verified by several documents from the 18th century that are located in the notary archive of Sarzana. Like every Shrine, the one of Roverano is a font of graces and of miracles, several of which, other than by tradition, are passed down generation to generation by documents. We are able to remember the event of the Viceroy of Mexico, the Count Feunclava, who was saved by Our Lady of Roverano while he was trying to resist the aggression of some rogues on the road of Bracco on a dark night in 1748. Another extraordinary fact is that which concerns the butler of the Archbishop of Genoa. In 1870 the butler had forgotten to deliver to the Archbishop a little branch of the flowering olive tree given to him by the custodian of the Shrine. When, after many months, he once again opened the box containing the olive branch, it still had flowers fresh as if they were cultivated just at that moment. Another proof of the benevolence of the Blessed Mother occurred on the 30th of August 1823; in fact, on that torrid summer day, the laborers who were working on the construction of the road to the Shrine were left with almost no wine; the Virgin, moved with pity for those tired and thirsty men, made it so that the little wine that was left in the cask would never end. Amongst the many miraculous healings that came about thanks to the intervention of Our Lady of Roverano merits to be remembered the one of Domenica Ferrari, a poor woman of L’Ago forced to remain infirm due to a broken leg. The poor woman, seeing that all treatments were useless, one day took her crutches and dragged herself, with much fatigue and pain, all the way to the Shrine; having arrived in front of the miraculous image she gathered herself in devout prayer and instantly the miracle occurred. At the beginning of the 20th century the dream of crowning the Madonna as Queen of Roverano was made a reality. A generous contest was held among the inhabitants of various nearby towns in order to give money or jewelry for the acquisition of the golden crown. On the 1st of September 1901 the feasts in honor of Mary began and continued until the 8th day, the day of the Coronation.



Image which depicts the apparition of the Blessed Mother to the two shepherd girls



The authorities rush to venerate the wondrous image that mysteriously returned by itself to the place of the apparition



The miraculous icon



View of the Olive Trees that flower every year on the occasion of the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which the Church celebrates on the 8th of September



View of the Shrine



Ex voto, religious offerings given as thanks for answered prayers



Interior of the Shrine



The altar where the miraculous image of the Virgin of Roverano is located