



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in VALE DO PARAÍBA



BRAZIL, 1717

The history of the Shrine of Our Lady of Aparecida in Brazil, originated in the XVIII Century when some fishermen were casting their nets, as usual, in the Paraíba River near San Paulo. That day they found a statue of the Blessed Mother which started performing many miracles. In 1717, Father Pedro de Almeida Portugal e Vasconcelos, Count of Assumar, Governor of the port authorities of San Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Santos. One day he was traveling near the gold mines of Guaratingueta and stayed there from October 17-30. Here the Count was received with great regard and succulent banquets. Since they could not spare the exquisite fish of the southern Paraíba River, the Communal Counsel ordered the most expertise fishermen to cast the net, because they needed a large amount of food for the illustrious guest.

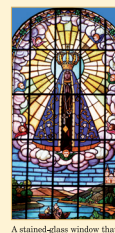
Domingos Alves Garcia, his son João Alves, Felipe Pedroso, his brother-in-law and João's uncle, along with others got to work. However, in spite of their efforts they could not catch even one fish. However, they caught a small decapitated statue of the Virgin Mary with the head floating lower down in the net. Being very zealous Catholics, they kept the precious exhibit on their canoe and cast the nets again into the river. Surprised, they saw a repeat of what happened to the apostles in the Sea of Galilee eighteen centuries ago: they found their nets so full of fish; they could not keep them all inside the canoe! The good fishermen attributed the miraculous catch to the presence of Our Lady of Conception. Felipe Pedroso, being the oldest, took the statue home and he and his family began praying before it. They started to notice a series of extraordinary events that still go on today. The first miracle attributed to the little statue took place on a clear and silent night: while the family and the neighbors were reciting the rosary in front of the statue, two candles went out without anyone blowing on them, and then they lit up again on their own. The light of those miraculous candles illuminated their hearts and reawaked a great love and devotion to the Virgin Mary. Another miracle was similar to the one that happened to Saint Peter while he was in jail and an angel broke open his chains so he could escape (Acts 12: 2-8). At the end of the XVIII century "a fugitive slave named Zacharias, was taken back to work in a factory, passing by the chapel where the sacred statue of the Virgin was kept, he asked permission to go to the church to say a little prayer. While he prayed before the statue, the chains miraculously fell from his neck and his wrists and landed on the ground. Moved by the event, the captain that was taking him back to his owners, left the price of the slave on the altar and took him home as a free man". The heavy chains falling from Zacharias' neck and wrists is an eloquent testimony of the power of the Holy Virgin Mary's intercession that frees penitent people from the prison of sin. In 1883 the first basilica was erected, today it is known as the "Old Basilica". August 15, 1967 the "New Basilica" was inaugurated. On the occasion, Pope Paul VI, through one of his delegates, offered to the Virgin a "Golden Rose". In July of 1980 Pope John Paul II entrusted the Brazilian people with a solemn consecration to the maternal care of Our Lady of Aparecida and gave the "New Basilica" the title of "Minor Basilica".



Drawing of the miracle of the big catch and the appearance of the little statue of Our Lady of Aparecida



A painting depicting the miraculous finding



The miraculous statue of Our Lady of Aparecida, Patroness Saint of Brazil



The Basilica of Our Lady of Aparecida is gigantic, the bell tower is 100 meters high, the dome is 70 meters in diameter, the nave is in the shape of a Greek cross—173 meters long by 105 meters wide—it is safe to say that with a total surface area of 18,000 square meters it has the capacity to hold more than 46 million worshippers. Pope John Paul II gave it the title of a Minor Basilica in 1980



Inside the Shrine. These photos were taken inside the Shrine and show the impressiveness of the Shrine



The huge Shrine is visible from 10km away



The devotional image of Our Lady of Aparecida



There is a story about a slave named Zacharias who lived on a coffee plantation and could no longer take the ferocity of his owners, he escaped and headed towards the city of San Paulo. The captain, responsible for the slaves found him in the woods. He put his hands and feet in heavy chains weighing seven kilos, but passing by the Chapel of Our Lady of Aparecida the slave asked Her for help. Immediately the chains unbound and because of that miracle, the captain let him free



The first miracle attributed to the little miraculous statue happened on that warm, clear night. While the family and the neighbors were reciting the rosary in front of the statue, two candles blew out without anyone blowing on them and then they relit by themselves. The light from those miraculous candles illuminated their hearts and reawakened a great love and devotion to the Virgin Mary