



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in FILIPOV

CZECH REPUBLIC, 1866

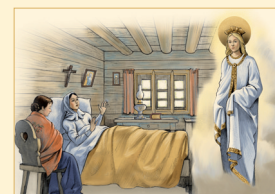
The construction of the Basilica of Filipov is indebted to the apparition of the Blessed Mother which occurred there in 1866. Located nearby is the house in which Magdalena Kade was born on the 5th of June 1835, to parents of German origin. At the age of nineteen Magdalena fell gravely ill. She suffered from pneumonia and pleurisy, and was then also overcome by encephalitis. In 1865 a serious ulceration appeared on her chest. Taking care of her were not only her brother Josef, with his whole family, but also two physicians: Dr. Görlich from Gersdorf of Sachsen and Dr. Ulbrich from Jirkov (Georgswalde). In November 1865 both doctors declared that she suffered from an incurable illness and that she would soon die. She was no longer able to get out of bed and she frequently lost consciousness due to the pain when her brother cleaned her wounds and changed the bandages. On the 21st of December 1865 the chaplain of Jirkov, Fr. Franz Storch, administered to her the Sacrament of Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick). They all awaited the arrival of a merciful death which would free her from the sufferings. Three weeks later, during the night between the 12th and the 13th of January 1866, Magdalena was not able to fall asleep due to the pains. Veronika Kindermannová, her friend who lived in the house next door, combed her hair that evening and then they prayed together, and afterward Veronika fell asleep. Thanks to the report written by the commission of the bishop, we have come to know of the description that Magdalena gave that night: "All of a sudden the room became luminous, full of more light than daytime. The curtain of the bed opened. I elbowed Veronika, saying to her: 'Veronika, wake up, do you not see this glow?' Veronika said: 'But I do not see anything.' In front of my bed was a figure that emanated a very white light, with a yellow crown on its head. I quickly thought it was the Mother of God. I united my hands in prayer and began to pray: 'My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit exults in God, my Savior.' Having said this, I heard a voice – but an unusual voice, different from that of people: 'My child, from this moment on you will be healed.' And in that moment the person disappeared and I no longer felt any pain." That same night Magdalena got up from the bed by herself. Her family members were overcome with happiness. In the morning she went to buy bread from the baker. When the neighbors saw her healed as she walked through town, they asked her what happened. Magdalena replied: "Last night I saw the Virgin Mary and she told me I would be healed. And I am healed. Nothing more and nothing less happened." The news spread very rapidly. All those who lived nearby wanted to be convinced of it in person. Many rushed to the home of the Kade family and Magdalena had to repeat to everyone what happened to her. Soon the house became a destination also of pilgrims coming from villages farther away. In May 1866 the Kade family cleared out the room in which the miracle occurred and they transformed it into a sort of temporary chapel. The old table became the altar upon which candles glowed from the morning to the evening. In the place where Magdalena saw the Virgin Mary was placed a pillow with beautiful embroidered needlework.

Another miracle took place a year later, in the period in which the first anniversary of the healing of Magdalena Kade was approaching. On the 8th of January 1867, in the same house, Magdalena Langhanová of Jirkov; She was not able to walk and her relatives had to carry her into the house. They made her lie down in the same place where Magdalena Kade had been, and then the girl, sad because for 11 years she had been bedridden with deformed legs from an illness, got up from the bed completely healed. The news of the miraculous healings began to be widespread, making the number of pilgrims continue to increase. Fr. Storch, chaplain of Jirkov, purchased the Kade house and decided to have a chapel built in its place; later it was then decided to begin construction of a church. The spiritual management of the pilgrimage site was entrusted to the Redemptorist Fathers in 1885 who in the years 1914-1915 built a convent near the Minor Basilica.

Around 1930, Filipov represented one of the most frequented pilgrimage sites of Central Europe. But after the end of World War II, the inhabitants of German ethnicity were banished from Filipov. The new inhabitants of Czech origin that arrived were not able to establish a proper rapport with this pilgrimage site that seemed destined to decay. The fact that the Basilica is found very close to the border of the country, favored frequent attempts, on behalf of the Communist authorities, to move the line of the confines so that the Basilica could be found in the German zone. Once this would have happened, nothing more could have impeded the deterioration of the Basilica.

The span of time from the 50s to the 60s of the 20th century, during which no maintenance was performed, was perhaps the most difficult period. The Basilica regained a new splendor only thanks to the commitment of Fr. Zdenek Maryska, the local spiritual authority who decided to have the Basilica and the chapel renovated.

Filipov now represents an oasis of tranquility in our frenetic world. It also functions as an important spiritual bridge for the bordering nations. In no other place along the Czech-German border do the people reunite, every week, for religious services and prayers. Masses are celebrated every Sunday at 10:30 in the morning in both languages. In the silence of this place, all visitors have the possibility to meditate on their own existence and on the difficulties they had to confront. It is unlikely to find something more comforting than the message given by the Virgin Mary: from now on everything will heal.



Portrait of the apparition



Portrait of the visionary Mary Magdalena Kade



The acknowledgment of the events in Filipov on behalf of the Church were confirmed by the official declaration with which Pope Pius XI, leader of the Roman Catholic Church, honored the "Church of Mary, Holy of Christian Faith in Filipov in a Minor Basilica. This gesture bestows, obviously, special grace for pilgrims



The healing of Magdalena Kade of Filipov occurred at exactly 4 o'clock in the morning on the 13th of January 1866. Shortly after the miracle a commission was appointed that carefully verified the events and sought to investigate the persons of interest. Important was also the testimony of both physicians who cured Magdalena and that they could not identify a natural cause for her healing. Filipov is the only place of Marian pilgrimage present in Bohemia during the 19th century.



In the church was also placed the bed upon which Magdalena Kade was lying during that dramatic event. After her miraculous healing, Magdalena Kade worked for years as a seamstress in her own home for the elderly. She lived to be 70 and died on the 19th of December 1905. The remains of Magdalena's body, stored in marble shell by Prof. Václav Antonín, were laid to rest near the entrance of the chapel.



The statue of the Virgin Mary that today is housed at the healing site, was based on the vision of Magdalena, sculpted from white Carrara marble, and paid for by the Countess Rozymská of Pilsen.



Interior of the Basilica