



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in ARRAS



FRANCE, 1105

In the year 1105, the Blessed Mother appeared in the church of Arras, in France, during an epidemic of the plague and of the *Mal des Ardents* (the burning illness), and she delivered to the Bishop a lighted candle, promising that whoever would take a drink of water that had come into contact with that candle would have been cured and would not have become ill. It happened like this: the candle did not extinguish nor did the candle consume itself until the epidemics ended. In remembrance of this miraculous occurrence a church was built in honor of "Our Lady of the Holy Candle" or "Our Lady of Ardents".

During the epidemics of 1105 two wandering minstrels of the region were condemned to death because each one had murdered the brother of the other. One night both of them had a vision. The Virgin Mary appeared to them saying: "Go to Arras, both of you, to Bishop Lambert of Guines and go with him to visit the sick in the Cathedral. A woman dressed in white will descend from the choir loft and will give you a candle. All ill people who drink the water that has come into contact with this candle, and who then pour some of the water over their wounds, will be cured".

At the end, the Virgin posed a condition: the two minstrels, however, would have had to reconcile between themselves. The two went to Arras in search of the Bishop. He became aware that these two hated each other unto death and in no way could they have collaborated with each other in order to deceive him. The Bishop reconciled them: so the three went together to the Cathedral and passed a night there in prayer and penitence. The following day was Pentecost Sunday, the 28th of May 1105. At the first crow of the rooster that morning the Virgin, dressed in white, descended from the choir loft with a lighted candle which she handed to the minstrels. They let fall a few drops of melted wax into the Holy Water that was offered and given as drink to all the sick - who were then immediately restored to health.



Contemporary stained glass window of the church of Saint Nicholas in Arras. These windows were done by master glass-worker Pierre Turpin and designed by Charles Hollart. Here the Blessed Mother descends from the choir loft in the Cathedral of Arras and as promised presents the miraculous candle to the two minstrels.



Bishop Lambert consoles the sick who suffer from the ailment of *Ardents*, but he can do nothing to cure them... until the Virgin Mary appears with a miraculous candle in her hand.



Exactly what the ailment of the *Ardents* was is unknown. From manuscripts it is deduced that it was a disease which "burned" and slowly consumed whomever was affected. Often they suffered an excruciating internal heat and were then brought into convulsions, delirium, blindness, and sometimes it was aggravated also by eruptions of pus from their skin. Still today it is wondered what kind of illness it could have been. Since this disease spread mostly during the periods of famine, some have ventured to guess that perhaps they suffered from ergotism (toxicosis due to several blight of the grain, which brings a sickness derived from the ingestion of bread produced from spoiled flour).



The two minstrels reconcile between themselves.



The two minstrels allow some drops of wax to fall into the water as requested by the Virgin Mary in order to cure the sick.



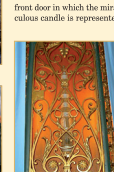
View of the Shrine



Interior of the Shrine



Bas-relief medallion above the front door in which the miraculous candle is represented.



The miraculous candle which is still preserved today.