



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

Apparition of the Virgin Mary in MONTE BERICO



ITALY, 1426-1428

The origins of the Shrine of Monte Berico are tied to the two apparitions of the Blessed Mother to Vincenza Pasini, a woman who was bringing food to her husband who was working on the hill: the first was on the 7th of March in 1426, the second was on the 1st of August 1428. The Madonna promised the end to the plague and asked that in that place a church be dedicated to her. Thus, in 1428, in a few months, rose the first little church and a small monastery to lodge a religious community committed to the welcoming reception of the pilgrims. In the first decades of 1400 a persistent pestilence reaped victims in the whole area around the city of Vicenza. Toward the middle of March 1426 a woman of advanced age, a certain Vincenza Pasini, went to the Bishop of Vicenza to tell him the story that, a few days earlier, on the 7th of March, while she was on her way to her husband, who was laboring in his little vineyard on Monte Berico, in the place where today the Shrine is situated, a most beautiful woman appeared to her and said: "Be not afraid, Vincenza. I am the Mother of Jesus, who died crucified for the salvation of mankind. Go and advise the people of Vicenza that I want in this location a church consecrated to my name; only then will they be liberated from the scourge that beats them. You will tell the people my commands: if they do not obey, the plagues will not cease. As proof of my volition, dig amongst these arid stones and a copious spring of water will gush forth." And she added: "You will say also that all those who will visit this church during Feasts dedicated to me and on the first Sunday of every month, will have abundant graces, and they will receive my maternal benediction." The Bishop did not believe her, as the Magistrates of the City did not believe her, those to whom Vincenza also turned. The visionary explained that she had traced with an olive branch the perimeter of the church to be built in her honor.

Only two years later, on the 1st of August 1428, Vincenza had a second vision; and this time she went down to the city, starting to shout in a loud voice that which happened to her. And the people – who meanwhile were continuing to die because of the plague – began to believe her: and so it was that, on the 25th of that month, the authorities and people decided to initiate the construction of a primitive church, the early nucleus of that which, with successive expansions, would have become the most beautiful and important Marian Shrine in the Veneto region: that of "Our Lady of Monte Berico."

The Basilica Shrine is now composed of the combination of two churches: one of the Gothic style, completed in the second half of the 1400s; the other of the Baroque style, enlarged and completed by Carlo Borella (1688-1703), after the first extension based upon the design by Andrea Palladio (1576). The High Altar, with the highly venerated image of the Madonna, a statue sculpted in marble in 1430 and polychromatic, who under her mantle protects all the faithful who have recourse to her, is a masterpiece completed only in 1928. From the City of Vicenza one can access Monte Berico by using the walkway of stairs, a series of porticos, built in the second half of the 1700s, formed by 150 arches, as many as the beads of the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious mysteries of the Rosary, and every tenth arch, from a Chapel in which are painted the single Mysteries of the Rosary. Officiated by the Servite Order, also known as the Servants of Mary, the Shrine of the Madonna of Monte Berico is an uninterrupted destination of pilgrimages.



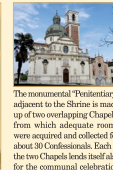
Painting which depicts the apparition



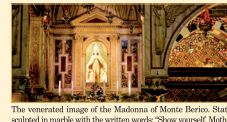
Vincenza Pasini, the visionary



View of the Shrine



The monumental "Penitentiary" adjacent to the Shrine is made up of two overlapping Chapels, from which adequate rooms were acquired and collected for about 300 Confessionals. Each of the two Chapels lends itself also for the communal celebration of Penitence. It is this, undeniably, the sacred space where, at the feet of the "Mater misericordiae" (Mother of Mercy) the Sacrament of Mercy is administered continuously.



The venerated image of the Madonna of Monte Berico. Statue sculpted in marble with the written words: "Show yourself, Mother"



Inside of the Shrine



The Museum of the Shrine of Monte Berico of Vicenza, set up in various rooms adjacent to the Shrine, gathers "ex voto" (works of art, liturgical furnishings) which are testimony to the strong devotion of the people to the Madonna of Vicenza.