

DESCRIPTIONS OF SOME SHRINES

LORETO (ITALY) BASILICA SANCTUARY "HOLY HOUSE OF LORETO"



The Holy House of Loreto is one of the most revered Marian shrines in the world. Since medieval times, the Holy House has been believed to be the very home in which the Virgin Mary lived, conceived and raised the young Jesus.

A large basilica has been built around the small shrine, and the sacred site attracts as many as 4 million Catholic pilgrims and visitors each year.

According to the New Testament, Jesus was raised by Mary and Joseph in a small town called Nazareth, near Jerusalem. Joseph was a carpenter, and their house was humble. Three centuries after the life of Jesus, the newly-converted Emperor Constantine built a basilica over the humble brick house believed to have sheltered the Holy Family.

According to Catholic tradition, the Holy House came under threat during the turmoil of the Crusades, so, in 1291, angels miraculously translated the house from its original location to a site in modern-day Croatia. An empty space was left in Nazareth, while a small house suddenly appeared in a field. The bewildered parish priest, brought to the scene by shepherds who discovered it, had a vision in which the Virgin Mary revealed it was her former house. On December 10, 1294, the house was again moved by angels because of the Muslim invasion of Albania. It landed first in Recanati, Italy, but was shortly thereafter moved for a third time to its present location in Loreto. The Holy House of Loreto has been venerated by many pilgrims, including many popes and saints, and numerous miracles and healings have been reported. Scientists are said to have confirmed the materials to be the same as those found in Nazareth and the house lacks normal foundations.

In 1469, a large basilica was built over the Holy House at Loreto, and still stands today. In 1507, a marble enclosure was constructed around the House inside the basilica. Over the centuries, countless pilgrims have knelt inside the basilica around the Holy House.

The Basilica built over the Holy House has been rebuilt and repaired periodically since its construction in 1469, leaving it with a Renaissance exterior and a Gothic interior.

Inside the basilica, the Holy House is, of course, the main attraction. It is a small brick building. Inside the house is an altar with the Latin inscription *Hic Verbum Caro Factum Est*, "Here the Word was made flesh." A statue of the Virgin stands above the altar.

"The Holy House of Loreto is the first Sanctuary of international importance dedicated to the Vergin Mary and the true Marian heart of Christianity" (John Paul II).

For more info: www.santuarioloreto.it

LANCIANO (ITALY) EUCHARISTIC MIRACLE

Lanciano is a small town situated south of Chieti, in the center of Italy. Lanciano guards inside its walls, in the church of St. Francesco, at the heart of the town, the first Eucharistic Miracle of the Catholic Church. The prodigious event, according to the unanimous testimony of the tradition and of the following documentation, dates back to the VIII century. This wondrous event took place in the 8th Century A.D. in the little Church of St. Legontian, as a divine response to a basilian monk doubt about Jesus' Real Presence in the Eucharist. During Holy Mass, after the two-fold consecration, the host was changed into five globules, irregular and differing in shape and size. The "Miracle" was first preserved in a chapel situated at the side of the main altar. In 1902 it was transferred into the present monumental marble altar which the people of Lanciano had erected.

For more info: www.miracoloeucaistico.com



SAN GIOVANNI ROTONDO (ITALY) - SAINT PADRE PIO

San Giovanni Rotondo is a village situated north of the Apulian coast and a place of pilgrimage for the devotion to Saint Padre Pio.

We'll visit the House Relief of the Suffering, hospital built in 1956 thanks to the offering of believers from all over the world. It is the most eloquent testimony of the action of Padre Pio who lived in the adjoining convent of St. Mary of the Graces of the Capuchins; the attached modern sanctuary gives hospitality to an exhibition with the objects of the religious and, in the crypt, his tomb. We'll see west of the hospital a flight of steps (at its foot is the statue of Saint Padre Pio) leading to the Stations of the Cross, going up till Mount Castellano.

For more info: www.conventopadrepio.com



MONTECASSINO (ITALY) ABBAY

In Montecassino, place south of Latium, is the Abbey dominating the plain land underneath on the rise of the same name that has gone through the centuries and the atrocities of the last world war, symbol of the thought of St. Benedetto. Indeed, it is here that the Saint arrived from Norcia in 529 retiring for 40 days in the place where once rose the temple of Apollo. After demolishing the pagan sacrarium, he erected the Church of St. Martino.

For more info: www.officine.it/montecassino
www.montecassino.it

CASCIA (ITALY) BASILICA OF ST. RITA

Cascia, small Umbrian town, is conditioned by a date, 1381, the year when in Roccaporena, a small suburb, Margherita Lotti (whom the world knows as St. Rita from Cascia) was born. The sanctity of Rita is all contained in her feminine earthly event: her life and her message. In 1937 the construction of the Sanctuary was started, on the place where the ancient church was situated, rebuilt in 1577; the Sanctuary had consecrated in 1947 and erected as basilica by Pius XII in 1955. It guards the body of St. Rita (1381-1457). In Roccaporena, 5 kms. far from Cascia, it's worth visiting her native house and the places of her life as a bride, a mother and a widow. In Cascia it's worth visiting the Monastery of the Augustinians where the Saint lived and died as a nun. No books, letters or diaries have been written by Saint Rita. Her message is a simple and heroic life. Rita is a great evangelizer; she doesn't proclaim herself, but Jesus the Lord and the strength of his mystery of the Cross and Resurrection. Rita is a powerful manifestation of the Holy Spirit, speaking and operating even in the church and world of our present time.

For more info: www.santaritadacascia.org



POMPEII (ITALY) SANCTUARY OF THE BLESSED VERGIN MARY

In Pompeii, place of great interest both artistic and archaeological, the Sanctuary of the Blessed Vergin Mary has a special interest. The history of the Sanctuary of Pompeii is linked with the life of its founder, Bartolomeo Longo di Latiano (Br). He came to Pompeii for his job in 1872 and he wanted to do something in favour of those peasants who lived in poverty. He started to gather those poor people in the small church of St. Salvatore, celebrating solemnly the feast of the Madonna. In 1875 he brought from Naples a canvas representing the Madonna of the Rosary that was immediately displayed to the veneration of the believers. After an apparition and a miracle, the image became the object of great worship. The Sanctuary was built in 1891 and in 1939 it was enlarged, so that the existing one is five times bigger than the former one. Because of the many miracles and favours bestowed by the Vergin Mary, the sanctuary has become in a short time a destination of endless pilgrimages. It is also called "the sanctuary of charities" thanks to the works rose for the will of Bartolomeo Longo, in favour of the little orphans, of the prisoners' children, ecc... Bartolomeo Longo, who was recently beatified, is buried in the crypt.

For more info: www.santuario.it



...SOME SHRINES

PADUA (ITALY) BASILICA OF ST. ANTHONY

Homage to Saint Anthony of Padua draws throngs of pilgrims to the ancient Italian city of his surname. Padua was His last home, and he is entombed there in the



magnificent Basilica of Sant'Antonio. Anthony was born to a noble family in Lisbon (Portugal) in 1195 and he received his early education at Lisbon Cathedral School. In 1210 he joined the Augustinian Canons Regular and he studied in Coimbra, at that time, the Portuguese capital. 10 years later Anthony was inspired to follow the footsteps of the first missionary martyrs of the Franciscan order. He became a Franciscan on the following year and he left for North Africa. But illness forced him to return and his ship was driven off course by bad weather and so he landed in Sicily. He reached Assisi and, thanks to his excellent reputation as a scholar and preacher, Francis of Assisi commissioned him to preach against heretics in northern Italy. Anthony had a powerful personality and he had a great knowledge of the scriptures. Unfortunately, he died at the young age of 36. The "teacher of the Church" (as Pius XII called him in 1946) was canonized in 1232.

The Basilica of Sant'Antonio dates back to Saint Anthony's time and it contains a series of bronze reliefs by Donatello illustrating Saint Anthony's life that are among the basilica's most famous treasures.

For more info: www.basilicadelsanto.org

LOURDES (FRANCE) OUR LADY OF LOURDES

The town of Lourdes, in the French Pyrenees, is among the most frequented pilgrimage site of the Catholic world. In 1858 the Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette, a 14-year-old little girl, almost illiterate, child of millers, for 18 times.

We'll visit the magnificent Sanctuary consisting of two churches, one over the other. The lower church is called the Basilica of the Rosary. Over it, the Basilica rises with its big spire. On the right of the temple, near the Gave river, there are three baths, the fountain with its miraculous water and the Grotto of Massabielle where Bernadette had her first vision.

For more info: www.lourdes-france.com

LA SALETTE (FRANCE) SANCTUARY OF NOTRE DAME

The Shrine of Our Lady of La Salette is situated in France, in the south east region of Rhone-Alpes, in the Department of Isere, at a height of 1.800 mt., south of France. On Sept. 19th 1846, the Madonna appeared to two young children while they were pasturing the cows. There was only one apparition. First the two children saw a shining globe opening with the Apparition of a Lady, sat over a stone, crying with her face into her hands. Then they saw her getting up, going towards them and, always crying, she recommended the prayer and the penitence.

For more info: www.lasalette.cef.fr

LISIEUX (FRANCE) ST. THERESE OF THE CHILD



Lisieux, capital of the Pays d'Auge, is one of the most charming places in Normandy.

Like other Norman cities, its birth goes back more than two thousand years. It has seen Roman occupation, the Germanic invasions and those of the Scandinavian pirates; it has suffered the Franco-English conflicts and, during the XVIth century, religious disputes. In the XIXth century, little by little, the town lost its importance - religious and then economic...until a miracle occurred, dramatically changing its peaceful existence.

It was at the dawn of the XXth century that France and then the whole world discovered the life and message of a young Norman Carmelite, Sister Thérèse of the Infant Jesus. The town where she lived became one of the most popular spiritual locations. It was the great basilica, built in honour of Saint Thérèse in the 1930s, which attracted the largest number of visitors. The Saint's tomb may be seen in the Carmelite chapel. The Gothic cathedral, a symbol of the prestigious past of the town, was her parish church and the pretty manor house, the Buissonnets, "the gentle nest of her childhood". A wax museum, the Diorama, retraces the major stages of her life.

For more info: www.therese-de-lisieux.cef.fr

SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA (SPAIN)



Just a few places can resist to human floods and preserve their own identity. Santiago de Compostela, the destination with the evocative strength of its history, keeps on draw millions of feet on its pavings. Here the pilgrimage, that during the Middle Ages kept along the streets for entire months everyone, ends and starts. Still today we can admire the churches, the monasteries, the hospitals, the works of art, but also the towns and the smaller centers that are situated along the way. Nowadays, after several centuries, the capital of Galicia, remains one of the places-symbol of the Christianity. According to the tradition, the Apostle James, after converting Spain to Christianity, returned to the East where he suffered martyrdom in 44 a.C.; his disciples had brought back his body in the Iberian Peninsula, burying him in Galicia; but

when people forgot where his burial place was the apparition of a star ("Campus stellae" = Compostela) had signaled it. The legend says that Santiago had appeared during the battle of Clavijo (in 844) contributing to the victory of the Christians against the Arabs. King Alfonso II ordered the construction of the sanctuary, already at the beginning a destination of pilgrimage.

For more info: www.santiagodecompostela.org

FATIMA (PORTUGAL) OUR LADY OF THE ROSARY

The village of Fatima is situated in the central region of Portugal, about 50 kms. far from the Atlantic Ocean, in the territory of the town of Ourém.



On 13th May 1917 (and then during the following 13 months until October) the Vergin of the Rosary appeared to three children of Fatima.

The worship was authorized only in 1930, when the Church considered true the testimonies on the apparition. We'll visit the grand Basilica Sanctuary, built on the project of Pardal Monteiro, where is situated the Chapel of the Apparitions.

We'll then spend time in Aljustrel, the small village about 1 km. far from Fatima, with the houses where the shepherd children who experienced the manifestations of the Mother of God were born.

For more info: www.fatima.org

MEDJUGORJE (BOSNIA) OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE

On June 25th 1981 in Medjugorje, a small village of Herzegovina, 6 youngsters affirmed that they had seen a beautiful young girl who introduced herself as the Blessed Vergin Mary "Queen of Peace".



Since then, up till now, each evening at sunset, 3 of them have an appointment with the Vergin Mary of Nazareth. She speaks with them, she gives messages concerning them personally and others to transmit to the whole humanity. The especially important places in Medjugorje are 3: the parish church of Medjugorje, where all the eucharistic celebrations and the catechesis in several languages take place and where pilgrims say the rosary during the daily apparition. Since June 24th 1995 the apparitions have been taking place in a chapel next to the Church. Another place worth visiting is the Podbrdo Hill or Apparition Hill: a cross shows the precise place where the Vergin Mary appeared for several times to the visionaries. Another important place is the Krizevac Mountain, the mount of the cross, that dominates all the village. The high cross in concrete was erected in 1933 to commemorate the 1900 years since the death of Jesus Christ.

For more info: www.medjugorje.org