

## **Brief History of Rosa Mystica**

In a series of apparitions between 1947 -1976 Our Blessed Mother appeared to a humble Italian woman, Pierina Gilli, under the title of "Rosa Mystica" (Mystical Rose) in Montichiari and Fontanelle, Italy. It is believed that the original purpose of these appearances of Our Blessed Mother was to reform the clergy and religious houses of the time. By appearing with the two children of Fatima, Francisco and Jacinta on December 7, 1947, (the sixth apparition) she showed that her appearance was a continuation of the message of Fatima -- urging us to pray the Rosary and do penance.

Pierina Gilli was born on August 3, 1911, at Montichiari and worked as a nurse in the hospital there. Our Lady first appeared in the spring of 1947 with three swords each piercing her heart. She said only the words: "Prayer, Penance, and Expiation," and was silent. The swords symbolized: lost vocation as a priest or religious, lost grace of religious who live in deadly sin, and lost faith of religious leaving vocations to return to the world.

In the second apparition (July 13, 1947) Our Lady appeared in a white dress adorned with three beautiful roses: white, red, and yellow which Pierina was allowed to see in place of the swords. The white rose represented a spirit of prayer, the red one represented a spirit of sacrifice, and the yellow rose a spirit of penitence and conversion. Our Lady said, smiling, "I am the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of all of you." Here she paused, then she went on, "Our Lord sends me to bring a new Marian devotion for all male and female institutes, religious orders, and secular priests. I promise those religious institutes, orders, and secular priests who venerate me in this special way my special protection, an increase of spiritual vocations, fewer betrayed vocations, and great sanctity among the servants of God...." She wished to have the 13<sup>th</sup> of each month dedicated to her, a "Day of Mary" and each July 13<sup>th</sup> celebrated in honor of the 'Rosa Mystica,' the Mystical Rose.

In still another apparition Mary asks for the veneration of her Immaculate Heart in religious congregations. For December 8 (every year) she decrees an Hour of Grace for the whole world, to be celebrated at noon. In Our Lady's words, "This Hour of Grace will produce great and numerous conversions. Hardened and cold hearts resembling this marble will be touched by divine Grace, and they will become faithful to Our Lord in loyal love. Many graces for soul and body will be received through this devotion." During the same apparition she asks for a statue modeled according to the characteristics of the Rosa Mystica.

The Rev. Fr. Thaddeus Laux, founder of the international Maria Rosa Mystica Society, had a private audience with the Holy Father in 1985. Pope John Paul II told Fr. Laux: "I am receiving many reports from Cardinals, Bishops and Missions...reports of Rosa Mystica statues shedding tears, reports of cures and conversions through the Rosa Mystica, reports that people return to prayer and penance through the Rosa Mystica statue of Montichiari." Although six local bishops have expressed their belief in the appearances, so far no official declaration has been made. It is important to note that in 1966, Pope Paul VI approved the new canon law (Canon 1186) which states, "It is permissible, even without the express permission of the Church, for the faithful to follow alleged apparitions, prophecies and miracles, as long as they contain nothing which contradicts the Church's teachings or doctrines on Faith and Morals." Because the apparitions in Montichiari and Fontanelle are a matter of private revelation, Catholics are left to decide themselves how much personal spiritual emphasis to place on apparitions and the messages they deliver.