

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

In the town Genazzano, Italy (long before the coming of Christ) there was a temple built for Venus, the Roman pagan goddess of love. At this temple the towns had celebrations and fiestas in her honor. The most prominent day of celebration was on April 25 in which the whole town spent the entire day in celebration.

When the Roman Emperor, Constantine, converted to Christianity, the entire empire was affected. Christianity was now accepted and practiced openly and Genazzano was no exception. Pope Saint Mark, in the fourth century, built a Catholic Church on a hill close to the temple for Venus (which had been abandoned and left in ruins by this time). The church was dedicated as Our Lady of Good Counsel and Pope Saint Mark, in keeping with the traditions of the town, changed the feast the town would have for Venus on April 25 into the Christian feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel.

In 1365 the church was given to the care of the friars of the Order of Saint Augustine, however, by the fifteenth century bigger and more elaborate churches were being built and attention focused to these newer churches and the humble church of Our Lady of Good Counsel had become so weathered and broken down that people feared it would fall and soon people lost interest in the tiny church altogether.

A holy widow named Petruccia de Geneo, who loved our Lady very much, felt the church should be rebuilt bigger and better and, trusting in our Lady, she hired workers and began to do just that. Her neighbors, however, mocked her when she asked them for help. Petruccia could not build the church without the support of the town and because of that she hired more workers and eventually ran out of money. This did not cause her to give up hope, instead she only prayed harder and sacrificed more saying of the church "a great Lady will come to take possession of it."

The town of Genazzano had long stopped honoring Our Lady of Good Counsel but still held celebrations. According to legend, on April 25, 1467 in the middle of the celebration, someone noticed a thin cloud descending and landed on the walls of the church Petruccia had started to build. After a while, the cloud divided and in the center was a beautiful picture of the Blessed Virgin with the Child Jesus, at that moment, without the help of human hands, every church bell in the town rang loudly and clearly. People from all over had been attracted to the bells and when Petruccia, who had been praying at home at the time, heard of the miracle, she immediately rushed to the Church and began praying and said that our Lady had come to take possession of her church and the whole town joined Petruccia in praising our Lady.

The unexpected appearance was perhaps brought about by the construction work in this way: when the stone ledge (mentioned earlier) was being inserted into the wall, the plaster covering cracked, revealing the fresco beneath. The image was immediately hailed as the "Madonna of Paradise, attesting to its heavenly origin; but soon it came to be known by the former title of the shrine, "Madonna of Good Counsel". One striking aspect of the fresco, which has lent credence to legends surrounding the legends, is that the upper portion of the image is separated from the wall and leans slightly forward.

In only four months since the appearance of the picture, 171 miracles had been recorded and people gave the picture names like "Miraculous Madonna" and "Madonna of Paradise". Two strangers one Albanian and the other Slav, had traveled to Genazzano to see this miraculous picture and agreed that they had just seen the same picture in Scutari, Albania. After hearing of the picture and the numerous miracles, the Holy Father in Rome sent two bishops to study and examine the miracle. After careful examination, the bishops concluded that this was the same picture which had been venerated in Scutari. There was an empty space the exact same size of the picture in the church in Scutari where the picture had been. The bishops also noted the picture had been painted in wall plaster as thin as an eggshell, testifying to its miraculous origins.

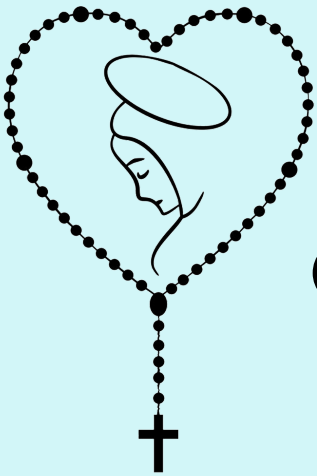
Petruccia's church was finished, however, in the end it became a basilica and has stood for many centuries since surviving through many wars, particularly World War II. The Germans bombed the basilica, destroying the main altar and the walls which caused all the statues and plaster painting to be destroyed. However, the miraculous picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, only a few yards away was still as beautiful as the first day it appeared.

Countless pilgrimages and miracles have been recorded there. Our Lady had always proved herself a loving Mother and treasurer of Divine Grace. Pope Urban VIII went on a pilgrimage to the Shrine. Pope Benedict XIV approved a Pious Union of Our Lady of Good Counsel and became its first member. And it was Pope Leo XIII who authorized the insertion of "Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us" into the Litany of Loreto and Pope Pius IX who inserted "Mother of Good Counsel" into the Litany of the Blessed Virgin. Her feast day is now celebrated on April 26.



# OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL

Feast Day April 26<sup>th</sup>



Novena to  
Our Lady of Good Counsel begins  
Thursday, April 20, 2023



*Most Glorious Virgin, chosen by the Eternal Counsel to be the Mother of the Eternal Word made flesh, thou who art the treasurer of Divine graces, and the advocate of sinners, I, thy most unworthy servant, have recourse to thee; be thou pleased to be my guide and counselor in this vale of tears.*

*Obtain for me through the Most Precious Blood of thy Divine Son, the forgiveness of my sins, the salvation of my soul, and the means necessary to obtain it. In like manner, obtain for Holy Mother the Church victory over her enemies, and the spread of the kingdom of Jesus Christ upon the whole earth.*

*Amen.*