

Letter from the French Alps

Dear Parishioners,

I write to you from the French Alpine shrine of *Notre-Dame de Laus*, where, beginning in 1664, Our Blessed Mother appeared over a period of 54 years to a village woman who is now known as Venerable Benoîte Rencurel.

The apparitions in this lovely mountain oasis of peace received ecclesiastical approbation only recently, in the year 2008. But for 350 years it has been drawing pilgrims to its sanctuary. The message follows familiar lines, as if by way of emphasizing the essential simplicity of the Gospel. And as always, Heaven identifies itself to dispel the mists of doubt. Here the lovely woman used words not common to our ears, yet full of elegance and meaning. They are words which I think you will cherish:

“I AM LADY MARY”

Yes, this woman upon whom we depend so entirely is indeed of royal blood. She is the Queen Mother, “Lady Mary.” Full of beauty and dignity. And as if by way of emphasizing her prerogatives, there is a monumental plaque inside the house of worship that reads:

“THIS CHURCH WAS BUILT BY ORDER OF
THE HOLY VIRGIN”

I arrived here on a brief visit, finding myself drawn as ever to the places touched by Mary’s presence. And immediately I began to hear the tales of grace from the mostly French pilgrims:

A woman in the church sitting in an air of contagious happiness told me of her cure from a deadly disease.

A married couple at the point of divorce came as a last resort to the shrine. In three days, the husband told me, holding back the tears, his marriage to the love of his youth was saved. That was ten years ago. They were not Catholics then but now are members of the Church and children of Mary.

Another couple, married 50 years, told me how they met and fell in love at this very sanctuary. They too, return to the place where Heaven reached them and guided their vocation.

Here is a place of true sanctuary and joy, even as the chaotic world swirls around, it remains a refuge for the wounded and thirsting soul of man. Such are the sanctuaries of our Holy Religion.

Peace to you, my friends. I am praying daily for your intentions...



Milan Cathedral



The lofty Gothic arches of the grand cathedral interior

--Father de Rosa