

The Virgin of Pompeii

All of Italy is dotted with Marian shrines. And one of the most beloved is certainly that of the Blessed Virgin of the Rosary in Pompeii.

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The start of shrine's construction dates back to May 1876, in the wake of the arrival of the icon of the Virgin of the Rosary that the lawyer Bartolo Longo, who had had a strong spiritual experience walking in the countryside nearby, had sent to Pompeii.

The inspiration was strong. A voice suggested to him: "If you want salvation, spread the Rosary to all around you. It is the promise of Mary, whoever propagates the Rosary shall be saved!"

In 1901, seeing the great crowds of pilgrims, Pope Leo XIII consecrated the shrine as "the Parish of the World."

The construction was begun, as willed by Bartolo Longo who was proclaimed Blessed by Pope John Paul II on October 26th, 1980, and was made possible by donations and gifts from around the world. Particularly significant was that of "a penny a month" from all the inhabitants of the Pompeii Valley.

Bartolo Longo, a promoter of devotion to the Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii, wrote numerous texts and prayers, some of which are considered true "best sellers" of Marian literature world-wide.

The wish he expressed on the day of the inauguration of the shrine's façade was to see the Pope bless the crowds of faithful and invoke peace for the world from the Shrine's balcony, and it would ultimately be fulfilled: On October 21st, 1979 John Paul II went as pilgrim to the shrine of Pompeii.

John Paul II visited yet again on October 7th 2003, to close the Year of the Rosary that he himself had called for.

Benedict XVI also visited the Shrine on October 19th, 2008, bestowing the "Golden Rose" to the Blessed Virgin, an honorary gift of recognition that popes formerly granted to sovereigns.

Other renowned shrines have also received this Golden Rose: Fatima in Portugal, Aparecida in Brazil, Lujan in Argentina and Guadalupe in Mexico.

Glorious Queen of the Holy Rosary,
who chose the Pompeii Valley
as the new throne of your power,
Daughter of God the Father,
Mother of God the Son,
and Spouse of God the Holy Spirit,
I beg you, by your joys, your sufferings and glories,
by the Mystery of the Incarnation,

in honour of which I have approached the Holy Altar,
deign to grant me this grace.