



[Our Lady of the Rosary] Pompeii, Campania, Italy 1875
with [*Novena*](#)



Pompeii has experienced tragedies and dismal times, but in more recent years the tragedies have been transformed into triumphs of Our Lady of the Rosary, and the unhappy times have been replaced by countless pilgrims who are the joyful recipients of miracles and graces.

One of the first tragedies to visit Pompeii occurred in the year 79 A.D., when Mount Vesuvius erupted with a vengeance. The volcano destroyed the Roman city and concealed it for centuries beneath volcanic ash. The city that developed about a mile from these ruins was also subjected to tragedy when it was ravaged in 1659 by a widespread epidemic of malaria that killed most of the population.

An ancient church that had been built before the epidemic was eventually demolished in 1740, and a smaller one was built as a replacement. Of the once-thriving parish, only a handful of people remained ----- and these were served by a tired and elderly priest. Finally, in addition to the various superstitions that gripped the people, they were additionally troubled and weakened by bandits who terrorized and pillaged. Pompeii eventually became known as "a most dangerous resort of bold and infamous robbers."

But Our Lady never abandons her children, and the most unlikely places have been chosen by her to display the wonders she can perform for those who are devoted to her. The instrument she used for her conquest of this unhappy city was Bartolo Longo [1841-1926], who would at first appear to be a most unlikely choice.

Educated in Naples to be an attorney, Bartolo was introduced to Satanism during his college days. After "ordination" as a priest in the church of Satan, he spent many years in the exercise of his office by preaching, officiating at the rites, publicly ridiculing the Catholic Church and her priests, and speaking against all matters relating to the Catholic religion. Longo was brought to Satan by bad companions; a good friend, Vincente Pepe, brought him back to God. Vincent eventually succeeded in placing Bartolo in the care of a Dominican friar, Alberto Radente, who helped him in the final stages of withdrawal from the sect.

After returning to the Sacraments, Bartolo decided to make reparation by joining a group of people who cared for the poor and the sick. A member of this group was Countess di Fusco, a wealthy widow who owned property near the ancient ruins. Commissioned by her to collect the rents, Bartolo saw for himself the desolation of the city and the spiritual poverty of the people.

One day in October 1872, while he paused in the fields near Pompeii, he began to reflect on his previous consecration as a priest of Satan. He tells us:

I thought that perhaps as the priesthood of Christ is for eternity, so also the priesthood of Satan is for eternity. So, despite my repentance, I thought that I was still consecrated to Satan, and that I am still his slave and property as he awaits me in Hell. As I pondered over my condition, I experienced a deep sense of despair and almost committed suicide. Then I heard an echo in my ear of the voice of Friar Alberto repeating the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary:

"One who propagates my Rosary shall be saved." These words certainly brought an illumination to my soul. Falling to my knees, I exclaimed: "If your words are true that he who propagates your Rosary will be saved, I shall reach salvation because I shall not leave this earth without propagating your Rosary." Like an answer to my promise, the little bell of the parish church of Pompeii rang out, inviting the people to pray the Angelus. This incident was like a signature to my firm decision.

Without delay, Bartolo organized a parish mission and invited a group of priests to speak about devotion to the Holy Rosary. To conclude the mission, he planned to exhibit a painting of Our Lady. He found an appropriate picture in a Naples shop, but unfortunately, he could not afford to purchase it. He was later informed

that the picture was unsuitable, since Canon Law at that time required that a painting be executed in oils upon

canvas or wood. The picture he had chosen was an oleograph on paper.

On his return home he shared his disappointment with Friar Alberto Radente, who told him of a painting that a nun named Mother Concetta had in her convent. Since she was willing to part with it, Friar Alberto encouraged Bartolo to ask for it. This painting had originally been discovered in a junk shop by Friar Alberto. He had purchased it for a mere eight carlins, or the equivalent of one dollar. The friar had given the portrait of Our Lady to Mother Concetta some time earlier.

When Bartolo saw this painting, he was extremely displeased by its pitiful condition and its historical and artistical flaws. He described the painting in this manner:

Not only was it worm-eaten, but the face of the Madonna was that of a coarse, rough country-woman . . . a piece of canvas was missing just above her head . . . her mantle was cracked. Nothing can be said of the hideousness of the other figures. St. Dominic looked like a street idiot. To Our Lady's left was St. Rose. This latter I had changed later into a St. Catherine of Siena . . . I hesitated whether to refuse the gift or to accept. I had promised a picture unconditionally for that evening. I took it.

Bartolo was enticed into accepting the picture by Mother Concetta. She encouraged him with the words: "Take it with you; you will see that the Blessed Mother will use this painting to work many miracles." The words proved to be prophetic.

Since the painting was too large for Bartolo to carry back with him, he wrapped it in a sheet and gave it to a man who routinely drove his wagon between Naples and Pompeii. Not knowing the subject of the painting, the man arrived with the portrait positioned atop a load of manure that he was to deliver to a nearby field. In this inauspicious manner the Queen of the Rosary arrived in Pompeii.

The painting arrived on November 13, 1875. Every year the faithful observe the anniversary of the painting's arrival with special prayers and observances.

Two months after its arrival, in January of 1876, the picture's first restoration was completed in time for the canonical foundation of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary which had been organized by Bartolo Longo. Another restoration took place in 1879 by Maldarelli, a Neapolitan artist, who thought at first that the task was hopeless. Still another restoration is said to have taken place in 1965 by artists at the Vatican.

As a fitting shrine for this painting, Bartolo arranged for the building of a magnificent church. Its construction was funded by the pennies of the poor and the substantial gifts of the rich.

While it was being built, three outstanding miracles took place. The first involved a twelve-year-old child, Clorinda Lucarelli, a victim of fierce attacks of epilepsy. Distraught relatives of the child made a promise to help in the building of the proposed church if the child recovered her health. Clorinda was cured on the day the picture was exposed for veneration. Two doctors certified on oath that the cure was nothing less than miraculous.

A young woman, Concetta Vasterilla, who was dying in agony, was also cured when similar promises were made. During the day when the cornerstone of the new church was laid, May 8, 1876, Fr. Anthony Varone, who had received the Last Sacraments and was dying of a gangrenous condition, was likewise healed. He celebrated Holy Mass the following morning and acknowledged his miraculous cure from the pulpit on the feast of the Holy Rosary.

A month after the cornerstone was laid, another miracle took place when Madame Giovannina Muta was cured. She had been in the last stages of consumption when she was persuaded to make certain promises to Our Lady of Pompeii. On June 8, while Madame Muta lay in bed, she saw in a vision the picture of Our Lady of Pompeii ---- although she had never seen the picture in actuality. But as she gazed, Our Lady seemed to cast

her way a ribbon on which was written: "The Virgin of Pompeii grants your request, Giovannina Muta." When the vision faded, Madame Muta was completely cured. Other marvelous miracles and favors have taken place which are far too numerous to mention here.

While the Sanctuary was being constructed, Bartolo turned his interest to helping orphans, writing books about the history of the Rosary and composing novenas and a prayer manual for use at the Sanctuary. While engaged in these activities Bartolo found time to marry the widow, Countess Mariana di Fusco, on April 1, 1885.

Together the couple spent their time and money in helping the many orphans who were entrusted to their care. They likewise helped candidates to the priesthood and religious life, Bartolo being credited with paying for the education of about 45 seminarians.

The church was consecrated by Cardinal La Valletta, Papal Legate for Pope Leo XIII, in May of 1891. In 1934, at the express command of Pope Pius XI, a great new basilica was begun. Completed in 1939, it was opened in the name of Pope Pius XII by Cardinal Magliones, Secretary of State to His Holiness. Pope St. Pius X had earlier expressed support for the Sanctuary and devotion to Our Lady of Pompeii.

The miraculous portrait of Our Lady of the Rosary is situated high atop the main altar of this artistically enriched sanctuary. In its golden frame, the colorful painting depicts the Blessed Mother seated upon a throne. On her knee is the Child Jesus, who is handing a Rosary to St. Dominic, while the Blessed Mother is handing a rosary to St. Catherine of Siena. Pope Leo XIII once stated, "God has made use of this image to grant those favors which have moved the whole world."

This once-discarded portrait, costing a mere dollar, which arrived in Pompeii under the humblest conditions, is now studded with diamonds and gems which were donated to Our Lady by her grateful clients.

It has been estimated that at least 10,000 pilgrims visit the sanctuary each day, but twice a year, on May 8 and the first Sunday of October, at least 100,000 pilgrims join in the solemn prayers which Bartolo Longo composed.

The former Satanist, the devout convert, respected lawyer and champion of the orphaned lived a long life of 85 years, dying on October 5, 1926. The tombs of Bartolo Longo and his wife are found in the crypt of the sanctuary.

The promise of the Blessed Mother that "One who propagates my Rosary shall be saved" was realized when Pope John Paul II affirmed the salvation of Bartolo Longo's soul at the ceremony of beatification which was conducted on October 26, 1980.

High atop the main altar of the basilica in Pompeii is found the miraculous painting that long ago had been purchased in a junk shop for the equivalent of one dollar.

MIRACLES AND FAVORS have taken place through the intercession of Our Lady of Pompeii, pictured above. The Blessed Mother, seated upon a throne, is depicted holding the Child Jesus on her knee. He hands a rosary to St. Dominic, and the Blessed Virgin places a rosary into the hand of St. Catherine of Siena. The portrait is embellished by diamonds and other gems donated by grateful followers of Our Lady.



Novena to Our Lady of Pompeii

V. O God, come unto my assistance;

R. *O Lord, make haste to help me.*

V. Glory be to the Father, etc.

R. *As it was in the beginning, etc.*

1. Behold me at thy knees, Immaculate Mother of Jesus, who dost rejoice at being invoked as Queen of the Rosary in the Vale of Pompeii. With joy in my heart, and my mind filled with the most lively gratitude, I return to thee who art my most generous benefactor, my dearest Lady, the Queen of my heart, to thee who hast shown thyself my true Mother, the Mother who loves me exceedingly. I was filled with groanings and thou didst hear my cry; I was in affliction and thou didst comfort me; I was in the valley of the shadow of death and thou didst bring me peace. The sorrows and pains of death laid siege to my soul, and thou, dear Mother, from thy throne in Pompeii with one look of pity didst make me serene. Who bath ever turned to thee with confidence and hath not been heard? If only the whole world knew thy great goodness, thy tender compassion for those who suffer, how all creation would have recourse to thee! Mayest thou be ever blessed, O Virgin and Queen of Pompeii, by me and by all others, both men and Angels, on earth and in Heaven.

Glory Be to the Father; Hail, Holy Queen.

2. I return thanks to God and to thee, O Mother of God, for the fresh blessings that have been showered upon me through thy pity and loving-kindness. What a fate would mine have been, hadst thou rejected my sighs and tears! Let the Angels in Paradise, the glorious choir of the Apostles, the noble army of the Martyrs, the holy bands of Virgins and Confessors give thee thanks in my behalf. Let the many souls of sinners, saved by thine intercession, who now enjoy in Heaven the vision of thine unfading loveliness, give thanks to thee in my behalf. I would that all creatures might love thee in union with me, and that the whole world might repeat the refrain of my hymns of thanksgiving. What can I render to thee, O Queen, rich in mercy and magnificence? What remains of life I dedicate to thee and to the spreading of thy devotion, O Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii, through whose invocation the grace of the Lord hath visited me. I will spread abroad devotion to thy Rosary, I will tell all men of the mercies thou hast obtained for me; I will ever more proclaim thy great goodness toward me, so that other sinners, as unworthy as I, may turn to thee in all confidence.

Glory Be to the Father; Hail, Holy Queen.

3. By what name shall I invoke thee, thou white dove of peace? Under what title shall I call upon thee whom the holy Doctors have named the Mistress of creation, the gate of life, the temple of God, the palace of light, the glory of the heavens, the Saint of saints, the wonder of wonders, the paradise of the Most High God? Thou art the treasurer of divine graces, the omnipotent answer to prayer, nay, the very mercy of God, which is shown toward the unfortunate. But I know, too, that it is pleasing to thy heart to be invoked as Queen of the Rosary in the Vale of Pompeii. And as I hail thee by this title, I perceive the sweetness of thy mystic name, O rose of paradise, transplanted into this valley of tears, to sweeten our miseries who are banished children of Eve; red rose of charity, more fragrant than all the spices of Libanus, who by the perfume of thy heavenly sweetness dost draw the hearts of sinners to the Heart of God in this thy valley of Pompeii. Thou art the rose of eternal freshness, watered by the streams of water from Heaven; thou hast set thy roots in a land parched by a rain of

fire; thou art a rose of spotless beauty , who in a place of desolation hast planted a garden of the delights of the Lord. May God be praised, who hath made thy name so wonderful! Bless, O ye peoples, bless the name of the Virgin of Pompeii, for all the earth is full of her loving-kindness.

Glory Be to the Father; Hail, Holy Queen.

4. In the midst of the tempests which have overwhelmed me, I have lifted up mine eyes to thee, thou new star of hope that hath risen in these latter days above the valley of ruin. From the depths of my bitterness I have lifted up my voice to thee, O Queen of the Rosary of Pompeii, and I have felt the power of that title so dear to thee.

Hail, I shall ever cry, hail to thee, thou Mother of pity, fathomless ocean of grace, sea of goodness and compassion! Who shall be worthy to sing the new glories of thy Rosary, the fresh victories of thy chaplet? In this valley, where Satan devoured souls in olden times, thou hast prepared salvation for a world, that is tearing itself from the loving arms of Jesus in order to cast itself into the deadly embrace of Satan. Triumphantly dost thou trample underfoot the fragments of pagan temples, and upon the ruins of ancient idolatry thou hast established the throne of thine imperial sway. Thou hast changed the valley of death into a valley of resurrection and life; and in a land once dominated by thine enemy, thou hast built a city of refuge, where thou dost receive thy people in safety. Behold, thy children, scattered throughout the world, have erected thy throne there, as a witness to thy miracles, as a memorial of thy mercies. From that throne thou hast called me to be among the sons of thy predilection; upon poor me thy merciful glance hath rested. May thy works be praised for ever, O Blessed Lady, and praised be the marvels wrought by thee in this valley of desolation and death.

Glory Be to the Father; Hail, Holy Queen.

5; Let every tongue speak of thy glory, dear Lady, and let the harmonious accord of our praises sound from evening even to the morning. May all generations call thee blessed and may all the coasts of earth and all the mansions of Heaven re-echo the hymn of praise. Nay, I will call thee thrice blessed, in union with the Angels and Principalities; thrice blessed, with the angelical Powers, with the Virtues of heaven, with the supernal Dominations; most blessed will I proclaim thee with the Thrones, with the Cherubim and Seraphim. O Queen of salvation, cease not to turn thine eyes in pity upon this thy family, upon this nation, upon the Church universal. Above all, deny me not the greatest of graces; that is, let not my frailty ever separate me from thee. Grant that I may persevere even to the end in the love and faith wherewith my soul is on fire at this moment. Grant, also, that all of us, who come together in the beauty of thy sanctuary in Pompeii, may be of the number of the elect.

O chaplet of the Rosary of my Mother , I press thee to my breast and I kiss thee in a spirit of profound reverence. Thou art the way that leads to the attainment of every virtue, the treasure of merits for paradise, the pledge of my predestination, the mighty chain that binds fast the enemy of our salvation, a source of peace to all who give thee due honor in this life, and a foretaste of victory to those who kiss thee at the hour of death. In that last hour, I shall look to thee, O Mother; thy coming will be the sign of my salvation, thy Rosary will open to me the gates of paradise. Amen.

Glory Be to the Father; Hail, Holy Queen.

V. Pray for us, O Queen of the most holy Rosary;
R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray.

O God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hast taught us to come to Thee with confidence and to call Thee: Our Father, Who art in Heaven, ah! good Lord, to whom it belongeth to have mercy and to pardon, graciously hear us through the intercession of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, for we glory in the title of children of the Rosary; accept our humble thanks for the gifts we have received from Thee; and do Thou make the shrine which Thou hast set up in the sanctuary of Pompeii, every day more glorious and more lasting, through the merits of Jesus Christ

our Lord. Amen.

GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

HAIL HOLY QUEEN [Salve, Regina]

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy; hail our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve. To thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us. And after this our exile show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.