

OUR LADY OF ASSIUT ASSIUT, EGYPT 2000–2001

The third apparition of Our Lady in Egypt, which is very similar to the others, is said to have taken place where the Holy Family sought refuge from the threats of King Herod. Assiut has a 40 percent Coptic population and hundreds of mosques. It was also known as one of the main centers of Islamic fundamentalism. Yet, the Blessed Virgin deigned to appear numerous times on the roof of St. Mark's Church, in full size, between the main towers of the church. She moved about and was often seen with lights emanating from her outstretched hands. To the delight of many, the appearances were often accompanied by the scent of incense and with oversized, brilliant white doves flying about, sometimes in formation.



DAZZLING LIGHTS SURROUND THE VIRGIN

The appearance of dazzling blue-green lights that flashed over the church was a source of wonderment to all. The skeptics, however, believed them to be laser beams or other unusual lighting. The confusion about the lights was so widespread that the electrical current in the neighborhood was turned off as a test. Still the Heavenly Lady was visible and the Heavenly lights continued. About these mysterious lights, Father Labis from the nearby Copt Dronka Monastery declared, "If you look for the source of the lights, you can't find it. This is light from heaven." It did not take long for many church officials and city officials to give statements regarding the apparitions. Father Mina Hanna, the secretary of the Assiut Council of Churches reported that the sightings were "a blessing for Assiut." His Holiness Shenouda III stated that the apparitions "are a message of comfort from Heaven and one of confirmation of the faith of Copts, that heaven is aware of their struggle and is pleased by their perseverance."



THE APPARITIONS ARE VIEWED BY MANY

The apparitions stirred the secular world as well, with the BBC News reporting details of the happenings, as well as ABC News and countless newspapers around the world. Even television stations gave either live coverage or taped segments revealing the lights. Cameras of the witnesses were also busy, and many of their photos were shown on various web sites. It has been reported that thousands of Egyptians have flocked to Assiut, which is located more than three hundred miles south of Cairo. By the end of the visions, it was estimated that more than two million persons were witnesses to the apparitions. Like the other apparitions in Egypt, Assiut has also been associated with a great spiritual revival, the conversion of sinners and countless miracles of healing.

