

## **OUR LADY OF GARAISSON MONLÉON-MAGNOAC, FRANCE 1515**

### **THE FIRST VISION TO ANGLEZE SAGAZAN**

THE history of the chapel begins with a ten-year-old shepherdess, Angleze Sagazan, who was with her flock near the source of the River Cier in the Pyrenees of southwestern France. The Blessed Mother favored the simple child by appearing to her on three different occasions.

Our Heavenly Mother, wanting to relieve the hunger and distress of the people, asked for a chapel to be built in her honor, “Where I will spread my gifts.”

Angleze dutifully told her father what took place after the first vision, but was met with skepticism by him and the people who first heard the story. Some of the people nevertheless accompanied Angleze to the spot where the vision occurred in the hope of also seeing the Blessed Virgin, yet only Angleze was favored with the two following apparitions. Soon people from other areas journeyed to the place on pilgrimage, chanting hymns in honor of the Blessed Mother.



### **THE FOLLOWING TWO VISIONS CONVINCED THE DOUBTERS**

An historian of the time, Molinier, reports that the failure of crops was prevalent in the region so that the people were reduced to eating “a kind of bread, a pastry of mestain

black.” A painting in the heavily decorated chapel shows the visionary in the presence of Our Lady, holding a piece of this black bread which was miraculously changed to white. Another painting depicts a chest in the house of the Sagazan family full of fluffy white loaves being inspected by neighbors. The miracle that this painting represents is said to have convinced the people of the authenticity of the visions. When cures were being obtained, and the devotion of the people increased to a sizable amount, the first simple chapel was enlarged in 1540, to accommodate them. The



Virgin Mary’s request was realized by this enlargement, and Angleze, no doubt filled with graces and virtues and the love of the Blessed Mother, left the beloved place of her encounters with Heaven and became a Cistercian nun at Fabas where she died in 1582. The magnificent vaulted sanctuary that remains is a veritable treasury of art which dates to the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Paintings, sculptures, gilded frames and altarpieces, bas-reliefs and intricate carvings are deemed most precious by the people and are greatly revered and admired by all who are fortunate to view them.

### **THE STATUE OF OUR LADY OF GARAISSON (A PIETÀ)**

The statue of Our Lady of Garaison, which draws the attention of all, is a pietà dated from the sixteenth century. According to a painting on the wall of the chapel, the wooden statue is depicted as being thrown into a fire by the Huguenot captain, a Mr. de Sus. The statue was retrieved unharmed and is still enthroned above the main altar.

Of all the cures that have taken place at the shrine, the most notable one is that which was performed in the seventeenth century in favor of the young Louis XIV who had been brought there by his mother, Ann of Austria.

During the French Revolution of 1789, pilgrimages were interrupted, but were later re-established. A school was eventually built and all went well until the new anti-clerical laws of 1903. It was then that the school was closed, but twenty years later the school was re-opened, and today about 580 pupils are counted. The Baroque sanctuary is now

surrounded by the school, the rectory, and necessary parish buildings, some of which accommodate visiting pilgrims. The apparitions were recognized by two popes, Urban VIII and Gregory XVI who granted indulgences to those who visit the shrine, which was so blessed by the Mother of God