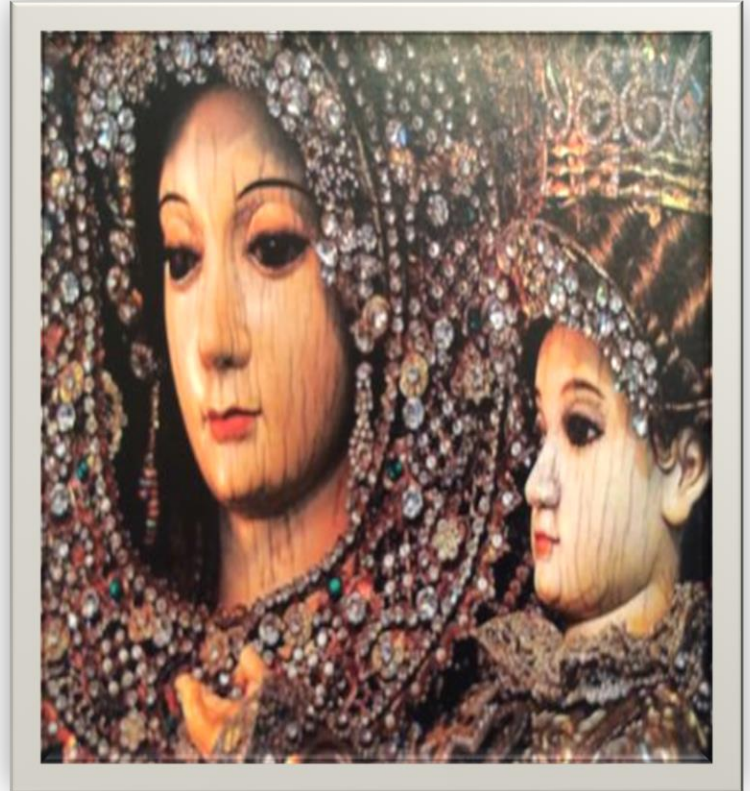


OUR LADY OF MANAOAG
MANAOAG,
PANGASINAN, PHILIPPINES 1610

THE FIRST APPARITION AT
MANAOAG

OUR Lady's concern for the welfare of the district of Pangasinan was shown in a number of ways: safety from fire, safety of crops from locusts, safety from drought, and also safety from aerial bombardment during World War II. Her love for this region is all-inclusive and inspired wonder in the people, as reported in the district's history. It all began in 1610, when a man was walking home along a lonely road and happened to hear a Lady's mysterious voice. Turning around, he was greatly surprised to see a radiant Lady holding a small child on one arm while a rosary was



suspended from her right hand. The vision was supported by a bright cloud over a small bush. It appears that nothing was said, only the Virgin looking sweetly at the man who was now on his knees in profound reverence.

When the villagers heard of the vision, they hastily journeyed there and soon built a small church over the place of the apparition. A town soon flourished near it which was named Manaoag which means "to call."

MIRACLES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

The Blessed Virgin has since protected the area from all manner of injury as she did during the time when the mountain tribes were accustomed to burning Christian villages. One day when Manaoag was destined to be torched, flaming arrows were shot into the little church. Not a single flame set it on fire. On an even greater scale, during World War

II, four bombs were dropped. Three landed on the patio and damaged the facade of the church while one bomb fell through the roof but failed to ignite. The church was miraculously saved.

Another wonder was the protection of crops in 1698 from locusts when they began to ravage the rice fields. They came in swarms so big that the sky was darkened. The image of the Blessed Virgin that had been brought to the Philippines in the early seventeenth century by Padre Juan de San Jacinto of Spain, was taken to the fields. Desperate for help, they placed the small image on the ground and watched in amazement as the locusts began to destroy each other in a way totally unexpected and in a way never seen before. The carnage continued until not a single locust could be found. Still another miracle took place during the drought of 1706, when the fields were scorched by drought and the seedlings were shriveled from the heat. When the sky remained cloudless for days, the people looked to Our Lady for help and took her image once more to the field. During the first day of a novena, and after a procession with the miraculous statue, the Lady showed her compassion by gathering rain clouds as soon as her image was returned to the church. The sky dimmed and a downpour soon fell that continued for days until the ground was refreshed and the crops saved.

Another spectacular miracle of the Lady's was noted in 1698, on Easter Sunday, when a fire of unknown origin devoured the whole town and crept steadily to the church. After the priest of the parish was notified of the danger, he rushed to the scene, went inside and snatched the statue of Our Lady to keep it from harm. He prayed and pleaded with the Lady, saying: "Dear Lady, if you do not spare the church from fire, I will hurl myself into the flames with you so that the two of us may be consumed by it." History notes that the flames immediately died down and were extinguished.

The devotees of Our Lady of Manaoag visit the shrine throughout the year, but especially in April and May when people from all over the world join in annual pilgrimages. The Lady's reputation for favors received is well known and miracles attributed to her are depicted in giant wall paintings in the church. The number of visitors was especially large on April 21, 1926, when the Papal Nuncio canonically crowned the image of Our Lady. But the people do not always go to her; she also goes to the people when, every twenty-five years, she visits all the barrios of Manaoag and all the towns in the district of Pangasinan. Our Lady has certainly proved her love for the people, and they for her