

OUR LADY OF ST. BAUZILLE-DE-LA -SYLVE HÉRAULT, FRANCE 1873

AUGUSTE Arnaud was a good man, thirty years of age, who regularly attended Holy Mass on Sundays. He had been married six years, was the father of two children and a respected member in his community. But he was accustomed to doing something that the Blessed Mother did not like, and she meant to correct him. What the Virgin did not like was that Auguste worked on Sundays.

THE FIRST VISION

According to custom, Auguste attended Holy Mass on Sunday, June 8, 1873, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, and then went to his vineyard to tend the vines. After working two hours, Auguste sat down to rest, eat his packaged lunch and smoke his pipe. While doing this, he suddenly saw before him a beautiful young woman dressed in white. He described the vision as wearing a white veil that reached to her feet. She wore a fringed belt and a tall crown like those worn by bishops.

Auguste quickly rose to his feet and asked, “Who are you?”

The vision replied, “I am the Blessed Virgin. Do not be afraid.”

Auguste was reassured by these words and listened with great emotion as Mary continued to speak: You have the disease of the vine. You left St. Bauzille. We must celebrate his feast on the day it falls. Next Thursday you must go in procession to St. Anthony and hear Mass. In a fortnight you must go in procession to Notre-Dame, to the Canton of Gignac, Montpellier and the city of Lodeve. You must place a cross here, changing it later to another. Come in procession each year. Go tell your father and your pastor all of this. In a month I will come to thank you.



After these words, the apparition rose vertically and gradually disappeared.

Auguste left the vineyard immediately, and on arriving home he excitedly told his father what he had seen. Together they went to the village priest to tell him, but the priest met their remarks with coldness and skepticism, asking, “Why would the Madonna appear to tell a man not to work on Sundays?”

Nevertheless, Auguste continued to perform the mission given him by the beautiful Lady. The next day he contacted a carpenter who crafted a cross made of wood. Auguste took it to the vineyard and planted it where the Blessed Mother had indicated. It was only a temporary one since, according to the Virgin, he was to replace it with a wrought iron cross with the image of the Virgin in the middle.

On June 12, he and his family visited the chapel of St. Anthony, and on June 22 he made the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Grace in Gignac and the other places requested by the Lady. Finally, on July 4, he replaced the wooden cross with an iron cross that he set on a stone pedestal.

THE SECOND VISION

News of the vision spread everywhere so that many of the curious and the skeptics journeyed to the vineyard to witness the second vision promised by the Lady.

Expecting a large crowd, Auguste’s wife was very concerned and wondered what would happen to him if the Lady did not appear, and the people, who had traveled from far away, were disappointed. But Auguste did not fear and fully expected the Lady to come as she had predicted. On the day promised, July 8, 1873, Auguste and a crowd numbering about five hundred people went to the vineyard to await the time of the apparition. After a few moments, Auguste took off his hat and raised both arms high in the air and seemed transfixed by what he saw. But the people saw nothing.

In a moment or two with his arms still raised, Auguste was carried with uncommon speed to the cross about forty yards away. He prayed silently while looking at the Virgin who was dressed in the same manner as before except that now her clothes were colored gold. She held a rosary in her right hand and said sweetly,

Do not work on Sundays. Blessed is he who believes and unhappy the man who does not believe. You must go to Our Lady of Gignac in procession with

your whole family. She slipped the rosary to her left hand and raising her right hand high, she blessed Auguste and the crowd. She spoke for the last time before disappearing, "Let us sing hymns." Auguste turned to the people and in a low voice said, "Tell them to sing." The crowd then began to sing the Magnificat

From that time on, the number of people visiting the area increased so that many candles, flowers, rosaries and ex-votos were collected. This piqued the interest of the bishop who promptly appointed a Commission of Inquiry. After witnesses were questioned, and the work of the commission was completed, the bishop, in 1876, recognized the authenticity of the apparitions.

A chapel, as well as a convent for Franciscan nuns, was built near the place of the visitation. For many years the nuns cared for the sanctuary and the people who visited there. Auguste Arnaud died on February 8, 1936, at the age of ninety-two, and was buried in the chapel where his tomb reads: At the feet of the Virgin he so loved and so faithfully served, here lies in wait for the blessed resurrection the body of Augustus Arnaud, piously asleep in the Lord's peace