

OUR LADY OF SHOUBRA CAIRO, EGYPT 1986–1991

The Blessed Virgin Mary favored the overcrowded quarter of Shoubra and the little church of Saint Demiana the Martyr by appearing atop the church on numerous nights, starting on Tuesday, March 25, 1986. On that date, the Lady appeared between the two towers of the church and was seen by the people living in the houses nearby. They were alerted to the vision when their homes became illuminated by the light that shone around the vision. While looking for the source of the light, they discovered to their surprise that the Lady was on the roof of the church. They saw her in full body, surrounded by a halo of light. When the people of the area heard about the vision, and it appeared again the next night, the narrow street in front of the church became crowded with the curious

who promptly recognized the vision as the Mother of God. In awe and reverence, they began singing hymns while many began the recitation of the Holy Rosary.

Newspaper and television reporters were soon alerted, so that the phenomenon was broadcast throughout Egypt and the world. The Coptic Pope Shenouda III lost little time in issuing a papal order announcing the formation of a special committee which numbered six members, four of whom were bishops. The committee examined the accounts of eyewitnesses, and on Thursday, April 10, 1986, at midnight they went to the church to closely examine all that was taking place. To their satisfaction and wonder,



they saw the Holy Virgin in a clear form surrounded by a halo of light between dawn and 5:00 a.m.

The committee met again and, after examining witnesses, learned that the apparition of the Virgin appears in different forms. Incense is noted and white doves fly about.

There was a very luminous and radiating, unnatural light that appeared inside the church tower that also shines to the outside.

The light continued even though the whole quarter should have been dark when the electric power was turned off to perform a test. The

Coptic Pope Shenouda III in his statement following the committee's results, stated:

Let us thank the Lord for this blessing on the people of Egypt and for the repetition of these spiritual phenomena.... We are contented to take from these apparitions their blessings, the satisfaction of the saints and the positive action of these matters in our hearts.

The report of the committee was sent to the Holy Synod that was assembled on June 21, 1986. It reported that the apparitions were not limited to night hours, but also occurred during the day; that they were not limited to the church towers but also occurred inside the church on the eastern side of the altar. The apparitions were not limited to the Blessed Mother because others also appeared, including the Child Jesus



and the martyr Saint Demiana who held a green palm, just as she appears in one of the church's icons. The apparitions, they noted, were repeated over a long period of time and that they still occurred on June 20, 1986, as witnessed by a delegation. They were informed that not only a luminous glow surrounded the Virgin, but also, at times, even flames of fire. Published in the Watani newspaper of April 20, an article told of the Virgin surrounded by a transparent light, that the Virgin wore a halo of light and that



she looked at the crowds and often extended her arms toward them in blessing. The report tells that white doves were often seen, sometimes flying in formation with their wings extended, but not flapping them. It was revealed that the Blessed Mother was seen wearing white and sometimes blue or red colors. The Lady, it was recorded, also appeared inside the church in a normal size sometimes surrounded by luminous colors, and that a measure of light that appeared by the altar circulated three times around the church over the heads of the people. To the delight and spiritual enrichment of the people, the apparitions of Our Lady of Shoubra continued until the year 1991. A statement from the Coptic Orthodox Papal Delegation of April 1986, states, "We are contented to take from these apparitions their blessings, the satisfaction of the saints and the positive action of these matters in our hearts."