



**Novena to
St. Michael
the Archangel**



SHALOM



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The apparitions of St. Michael the Archangel

The first apparition *(May 8, 490)*

In the year 490, the wild and arid Gargano region of southern Italy, still immersed in paganism, became rapidly famous thanks to an extraordinary event: a large bull, straying from the herd, got lost and was found three days later kneeling down before an immense cavern in an inaccessible place. Given the impossibility of retrieving the animal, the bull's owner, out of mercy, decided to kill it with an arrow of his arch. Inexplicably, the arrow changed its course in mid-flight and hit his eye instead.

The news of such an extraordinary event soon reached the local bishop, Lorenzo Maiorano, who immediately instituted three days of fasting and prayer to be done outside of the cave to discern the origin of this extraordinary event. At the end of this period, the Archangel appeared to him and said: "I am the Archan-

gel Michael, and I am always in the presence of God. The cave is sacred to me, chosen by me... because it is there that men's sins may be forgiven and all that is asked for in prayer will be granted. Therefore, go to the mountain and consecrate the cave to Christian worship."

(After this first apparition, St. Michael's light began to shine upon many other suggestive places, such as the Sagra di Val di Suasa in Italy and the peninsula of Mont Saint Michel in Normandy, where other miraculous events took place.)

The Second Apparition *(September 12, 492)*

Two years later, the nearby city of Siponto was besieged by the barbarians of Odoacre. If Siponto was conquered, Gargano would certainly fall as well. The bishop Lorenzo once again turned to the celestial spirit for help. During this time, St. Michael appeared to the bishop again and promised protection and victory over his enemies.

Strengthened by the angel's words, the townspeople advanced boldly as a sudden and

terrible storm began to severely assail the barbarian troops. Terrified, they fled and never returned.

Thereafter, the bishop, followed by a large crowd of inhabitants of Siponto, climbed up the Gargano to thank St. Michael. However, fear stopped the bishop from entering the mysterious and immense cave for the purpose of dedicating it. Instead, he and the people prayed outside, at the mouth of the cave.

The Third Apparition *(September 29, 493)*

Another year passed, and the bishop still had not been capable of overcoming his fears to enter the marvellous cave and consecrate it, as the angel had requested him to do in his first apparition. Spiritually agonizing into doubts, the bishop made recourse to the Pope who advised him to visit the cave with other bishops and priests of nearby cities and offer three days of prayer and fasting for discernment. During this time, the Archangel appeared to him once again, inviting him to go to the sacred place with all the bishops and celebrate the Holy

Mass there.

However, St. Michael added that the bishop was not to consecrate the place, as he had already seen to it himself.

This time bishop Lorenzo finally obeyed. Upon entering the cave, he found a splendid altar covered by a red cloth with a crystal cross on top of it. The footprint of a child was visible on a rock which was a sure sign to everyone of the presence of the Archangel. The bishop ordered that a church be built at the entrance over the cave.

The Fourth Apparition *(September 22, 1656)*

Many centuries had passed since the first apparitions in Gargano. In the year 1656, a terrible plague was claiming victims all over Italy. The archbishop of Siponto, Alfonso Puccinelli, turned to the powerful intercession of the Archangel. In response, St. Michael appeared to him at dawn on September 25, in Monte Sant'Angelo: "I am Michael, the Archangel," he said. "Whoever makes use of the stones from the sacred cave will be freed of the