DAILY COMPASS
Managing Director Riccardo Cascioli
MADE FOR THE TRUTH

INTERVIEW/FATHER UBODI

# Civitavecchia, “Our Lady really appeared”

ECCLESIA 18_02_2020



***Costanza Signorelli***



A statuette of the Virgin Mary that weeps tears of human blood fourteen times.Ominous messages that warn about satanic onslaughts against the family, apostasywithin the Church, and the risk of a world war. And that's not all. Add to this the curiosityof the media that rapidly detonates a media explosion, attracting a flood of pilgrimsfrom all over the world.

**In short, when on February 2, 1995** the first tears appeared, beginning the Mariophany of Civitavecchia, the Church was faced with an occurrence that was far from easy to evaluate. It did so, not without hiccups and slips-up, but with great seriousness and competence, first of all through the diocesan bishop, who had full authority. And above all he did so with the encouragement and then the support of Saint Pope John Paul II and the extraordinary and direct assistance of the Blessed Virgin Mary: it was She who guided the Church towards the recognition, which today can be said to be achieved and concluded.

**We hear about this and much more from Father Flavio Ubodi**, a Capuchin theologian who is one of the greatest experts in the supernatural manifestations that began in 1995 on the outskirts of Rome, as we can also gauge from his new book, Civitavecchia: 25 years with Mary (Edizioni Ares). An engaging and clarifying text that collects facts, messages and many other first-hand documents, since Father Ubodi was vice-president of the Diocesan Commission of Inquiry and the bishop's delegate to the Gregori family, the first witnesses of the events.

**Father Ubodi, once and for all: what did the diocesan commission establish about the Civitavecchia events?**

This diocesan commission, of which I was vice-president, was composed of 11 members, experts and qualified lecturers from pontifical universities, two of whom were chosen by the Vatican itself. During the two years of the apparitions (1995-1996) it met several times and carried out all possible studies on the case. Well: seven members out of eleven said that it was an occurrence that could not be explained, three members suspended their opinion requesting further investigation, and only one member expressed a negative opinion. Given these results, the Bishop of Civitavecchia, Msgr. Grillo, had the authority to recognise the facts of Civitavecchia as supernatural. And he did so, as bishop, with the publication in 2005 of the *Diocesan Dossier* in which, among other things, the Mariologist Stefano De Fiores declared: “In Civitavecchia there is the finger of God”; and through many public pronouncements, including during the pilgrimages and solemn celebrations at the *Madonnina delle Lacrime* (Virgin Mary of Tears) on the anniversaries of February 2nd or in its catechises, such as those on Radio

Maria. Furthermore, as bishop emeritus, he published his diary in which he definitively links all the extraordinary events that occurred at the Gregori family home to an initiative of God for the Church and the whole world.

**Wasn't a pronouncement from Rome also required?**
No it isn't. In a specific official document of the Church, which has been known to the bishops since 1978, it is stated that the competent authority for the recognition of an apparition, revelation, or similar event is in the hands of the local bishop.

**In that case why was a Vatican Commission also set up on Civitavecchia?**
It was Bishop Grillo himself who, convinced that there was no problem, sent the complete dossier to Rome, because he also wanted an official Vatican stamp of approval.

**And instead?**
Instead Rome vacillated and in the end set up a commission, of which no definitive official document on Civitavecchia is known. Even today, we don't know what kinds of studies were undertaken and what decisions were reached by that commission.

**So, are the facts of Civitavecchia recognised by the Church or not?**
Absolutely, yes. Technically it is the so-called "indirect recognition": this happens in the case of an event every time certain official and solemn acts are put in place that could not be explained if the authority responsible for them were not firmly convinced of the truth of the event itself.

**In concrete terms, what acts are we talking about?**
First. On June 17, 1995, with a solemn and public procession, the statuette of the Virgin Mary of Civitavecchia was enthroned in the parish church of St. Augustine and placed in a shrine dedicated to Her worship. So, if the Church did not believe in the authenticity of the event, why would the statuette of Our Lady that wept blood be displayed for veneration by the faithful?

Second. John Paul II has always been firmly convinced of the truth of the event, so much so that he prayed before the statuette of the Virgin Mary, blessed it and crowned it. The crown and the rosary that Saint Pope John II had personally placed on the statue are kept with it in the same shrine. Not only that, John Paul II also wanted to sign a written testimony of these acts of his, recognising that his solemn Act of Consecration to Our Lady of 8 October 2000 was based on the tears of Civitavecchia.

Third. On 8 December 1996, Bishop Grillo, through a solemn public celebration, consecrated the diocese to the Immaculate Heart of Mary following a precise request

that Our Lady had given to little Jessica in one of her apparitions and citing Her message verbatim. In this way the diocesan ordinary confirmed not only the phenomenon of the tears, but also that of the apparitions.

Fourth. Before leaving the diocese, the bishop celebrated Mass in the Gregori home, issuing a signed written declaration in his own hand in which he removed all the restrictions imposed on the Gregori family during the long years of his discrimination. At the same time he signed two prayers of Consecration dictated by Our Lady to little Jessica. And on March 15, 2005 he promulgated a decree of institution of the Marian Diocesan Sanctuary to encourage and safeguard the cult of the Virgin Mary.

Fifth. The bishops who succeeded Grillo: Monsignor Carlo Chenis personally designed the new Sanctuary and took action to find funding for it. Monsignor Luigi Marucci on April 26, 2014, during a solemn Eucharistic celebration, again performed the coronation of the Virgin Mary.

These acts are to be considered a mark of authenticity given by the Church to the events in Civitavecchia and the authorisation to venerate the statuette of the Virgin Mary. These are acts that can only be explained if the event is believed to be true. In light of all this, a decree for direct recognition of the revelations would no longer make sense today. And evidently it wasn't even part of Heaven's plan...

**What do you mean?**

If today, in certain modernist circles, we are witnessing a direct attack on the authenticity of Biblical Revelation, how is it possible to think that private apparitions, such as those at Civitavecchia, can obtain direct recognition? So I believe that the way of indirect recognition was the discreet and maternal way, which Our Lady chose for “Her” Church: almost without our realising it, the truth has been affirmed with great clarity.

**Allow me to go back to something you said about John Paul II earlier: can you tell us more about his very special relationship with Civitavecchia?**

First of all it must be said that, in the Mariophany of Civitavecchia, in addition to the statuette shedding tears of blood and the apparitions of Our Lady to the Gregori family, there is a third element. It is a second statuette, which replaced the “original” one when the magistrates seized it for investigation. Well, this second statuette, identical in every way to the first, was given to the Gregori family by Cardinal Andrzej Maria Deskur, a close friend of John Paul II, on direct request of the latter. When handing it over, the cardinal significantly blessed it in the name of the Pope. This Virgin Mary also immediately began to manifest extraordinary phenomena; they were investigated and

their authenticity was confirmed. To this day this second statuette, which is in the Gregori family's garden, periodically exudes an oily and perfumed liquid.

**Did John Paul II ever go to Civitavecchia?**

He went there several times incognito, to pray before the statuette. You see, we must not forget that John Paul II, besides being the reigning Pope, was also a great mystic. Therefore, not only did he represent with great wisdom the hierarchical Church, which questions and investigates with prudence, but he himself personally believed – whether by mystical intuition or by supernatural revelation. In short, John Paul II was a saint and like many other saints he believed in the events of Civitavecchia.

**Which other saints?**

Mother Teresa of Calcutta, for example, was very devoted to Our Lady of Civitavecchia. She had asked the Gregori family permission to visit them, but, due to health problems, she asked and naturally obtained permission to meet them in the house of the Missionaries of Charity in Rome. The servants of God, Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolarini, and Luigi Giussani, founder of Communion and Liberation, also expressed their belief. Father Giussani's comment after the tears was: "*Contra factum non valet argomentum*". Moreover, among the devotees of the statuette that wept blood, there were very well known figures, such as the mystic Natuzza Evolo or the exorcist Father Amorth. The latter, in particular, urged Msgr. Grillo to believe, on the grounds of an event that had preceded by six months the event in Civitavecchia: one of his spiritual daughters had told him that a statuette of Our Lady would weep tears of blood at the gates of Rome.

**Let's discuss the messages...**

Certainly, let's talk about the messages: a mother who weeps is a very serious concern, but a mother who weeps blood...!

**What do you mean?**

You said it. Our Lady begged us: "Don't make me cry My Son's blood anymore"! In Civitavecchia a Mother showed us Her terrible suffering because the blood of Her Son flows in vain. There is nothing more to add: the event itself in Civitavecchia is a message.

**Yet Our Lady, full of pity for us, has also spoken to us...**

Yes, by leaving messages that are turning out to be incredibly prophetic. For example, how can we not think about all the messages concerning the family? On July 16, 1996 Our Lady said: "Satan wants to destroy the family". And what are we witnessing today? Increasingly widespread divorces and separations, civil unions, de facto unions, same-

sex marriages, polygamy... All this is happening today, but twenty-five years ago, when Our Lady spoke in Civitavecchia, many of these realities were not even imaginable.

**What other prophecies did Our Lady make?**

The messages concerning scandals and apostasy within the Church are alarming. On 30 July 1995 Our Lady said: “Satan is taking control of humanity, and now he is trying to destroy God's Church through many priests. Do not allow it! Help the Holy Father”! Or again, the concern for Italy: “Your nation is in danger” and for all humanity: “Humanity does not realise that it is about to enter a world war that can be stopped. (...)”.

**You always use current time: but have the prophecies of Civitavecchia come true or are they still to happen?**

Today we can say that these prophecies are unfolding, but we are probably only at the beginning. Just think of what Our Lady says about Fatima...

**What does She say?**

She says: “Satan's shadow is now darkening the whole world and it is also darkening God’s Church. Prepare to live what I had revealed to my little daughters of Fatima”. On that same occasion – 27 August 1995 – Our Lady communicated to little Jessica the Third Secret of Fatima, which she still holds deep in her heart. So all this makes us understand that the prophecies have begun, they are ongoing, but they are far from over...

**At Fatima, however, Our Lady also spoke of the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart...**

Also at Civitavecchia! Immediately after the revelation of the Third Secret to Jessica, came the joyful promise: “Dear children, after the painful years of Satan's darkness, now the years of the triumph of my Immaculate Heart are imminent”.

**Did Mary at Civitavecchia also say what are the weapons to defeat Satan and triumph with Her?**

Love, prayers, humility, the Rosary and the true conversion of hearts to God, through consecration to Her Immaculate Heart and to the Heart of Her Son. As well as the Eucharist, Eucharistic Adoration and the Sacraments.

**Father Ubodi, there are those who maintain that it is not necessary to believe in Marian apparitions, because the Revelation is complete. What would you say to them?**

I say that it's true: the Revelation was completed with the death of the last apostle, so from a doctrinal point of view, the Lord had said all he wanted to say. Revelations and private messages, in fact, are like a call to live what is already contained in Sacred

Scripture, in Tradition, and they transport it into the urgency of the present time. It is as if Our Lady wanted to tell us: “Look, my Children, you have taken the wrong path, go back! Return to the Gospel! Convert!”. Now I ask: we may not be required to believe it, but why turn away from a Mother who, with all Her love, shows us the Way?