

The second event took place only sixteen days later. Father Blampin, a missionary of the Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary had completely lost his voice. No medical treatment was of any avail. As a last resort, he returned to Rome, hoping that the Italian air would help. By providence, he was led to the Convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, and to the sanctuary of the Madonna. A holy religious advised Father Blampin to offer Mass in the chapel there every day for the recovery of his voice. Several days later, on November 6, he was also advised to try, after Mass, to recite three *Aves* every hour as loud as possible. He agreed to try, even though he was barely able to whisper the Mass, and had been forbidden by physicians to try to speak out loud. With his heart full of confidence, he recited the *Aves* without any difficulty. The community was immediately assembled by the ringing of the bell. Father Blampin recited the Litanies and the Te Deum himself, before Our Lady's image. Soon after, the young missionary was presented to Pope Pius IX. His Holiness listened to the account of the miracle with great interest, and permitted Father Blampin to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving before the fresco itself. Thus it was that the corridor of the Madonna began to be transformed into a pilgrimage sanctuary. The first votive offering to be hung on the wall was a little slate—the one upon which Father Blampin wrote his reply to the religious who suggested the three Hail Marys. It was not long before the *Madonna of the Lilies* began to be called *Mater Admirabilis*—for the words admirable and miracle have the same root.

The devotion to *Mater Admirabilis* could not have been revived at a more propitious time. Pope Pius IX had been narrowly elected to the Papacy for the very reason that He was a political liberal. The Cardinals were hoping that His election would calm the storm of revolution that was brewing throughout Italy and Papal States. The new Pope imprudently hoped to win hearts and minds by releasing political prisoners. But many of them only used their freedom to provoke the revolt. Open rioting broke out in 1848 and, on November 24, Pius fled Rome in disguise, aided by the French and Bavarian ambassadors. The revolutionaries seized the Holy City and committed untold atrocities. It was during this siege that the Ladies of the Sacred Heart promised to have a medal struck, honoring *Mater Admirabilis*, if the Sisters and students were spared from all harm. On July 2, the Feast of the Visitation, peace was restored to Rome by the arrival of French troops. Two weeks later, the first medals were struck. On December 12, a grateful Pope Pius IX established October 20 as the *Feast of Mater Admirabilis* and granted many indulgences to the new sanctuary.

*(excerpted from www.salvemariaregina.info)

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinpire.com

MATER ADMIRABILIS ***(MOTHER MOST ADMIRABLE)***

Rome, Latium, Italy 1844



Mater Admirabilis
also called

The Madonna of the Lily

**This fresco was painted by a young French novice,
Pauline Perdrau in 1844.**

Mother Most Admirable

*In the course of the month of May, 1844, when the excessive heat already weighed on the people of Rome, the Ladies of the Sacred Heart, in the Convent of *Trinita dei Monti*, according to their custom, left the common parlor, to occupy during their summer recreations, a large corridor, on the first story over a cloister adjoining the church of the Convent.

At the noon recreation, the Sisters of the community were entertaining themselves, conversing on this beautiful month consecrated to the Most Holy Virgin, and they were remarking with delight the pomp with which it is solemnized in Rome. Just then the Reverend Mother was called away. On seeing her place vacated, one of the sisters exclaimed, "Ah! If the Holy Virgin would but deign to come and take the place of our Mother, and preside over our recreation!"

There was then in the common assembly a young postulant, who had come to Rome to finish some studies of painting. When she heard the religious invoke the presence of the Holy Virgin, her eyes fixed instantaneously upon an arched niche that was vacant, just in front of the Mother Superior's seat. To paint Mary in this niche, occupied in spinning, with a distaff near her on one side, and a lily on the other, to place by her feet the work-basket of the Superioress, and her footstool also; to represent on the upper part of the painting a fine view in perspective of the country around Rome—all this passed like lightning through the imagination of the postulant. Responding to the pious desire which had just been expressed, she said, "Would you like me to place the Most Holy Virgin in our Mother's seat?" "Yes, yes, bring our heavenly Mother in our midst," was the general response. "But how will you do it?" "That is my secret," answered the postulant. Here the project seemed to rest for a time. However, she who had broached the idea had not lost sight of it. The design of the painting was constantly in her mind; it impressed on her heart, in a still livelier manner, one of her dearest recollections—a devotion which, from her tenderest years, she had cultivated, for she had been taught to venerate the youthful Mary spinning within the precincts of the temple of Jerusalem. Often had the Holy Virgin been proposed to her as a model, particularly when, while still small, she also had to cover her spindle, as did this Most Holy Virgin.

But an insurmountable difficulty seemed to present itself to the execution of this design; the upper part of the niche could only be covered by fresco, a kind of painting above the talent of the postulant. A simple attempt to do it in fresco was all that was possible to her. She hesitated for a few days,

then abandoned the idea. But Mary had decreed otherwise, for she gave her future painter so much remorse, that this young religious believed it more secure to submit her interior anguish to her Superioress. The latter, after having maturely weighed the subject, finally gave her permission, even ordering the novice to commence the fresco, thinking within herself that it would only be a failure; but, as she has since declared, she wished to give an occasion of humiliation to one who was soon to consecrate herself, by vow, to follow Jesus Christ, meek and humble of heart.

On the 1st of June, 1844, the work was undertaken. On the 22nd, the Feast of Our Lady of Peace, the pure head of the Madonna began to give animation to the painting, already far advanced, and, in the beginning of July, it was finished; but, alas! The desire of the Superioress was fully accomplished, for the trial to the novice was complete. The fresco, which was painted on fresh lime, held the colors so deeply, that instead of the flower of the field foretold and promised, one saw, with dismay a gaudy figure, clothed in a poppy colored robe, and a yellow-orange colored veil deployed around a dark and threatening brow!

Everyone in the house, and the artist herself, recoiled with horror from the sight of it, as all were ignorant of the strange effect of a fresco while still humid; they concealed its existence from the pupils and visitors.

The effacing became a serious question; until finally a fresco-worker, though not an experienced artist, having entered this corridor which had been transformed into a studio, repeated these words in an authoritative tone: "It is a very delicate flower, seen at the dawn of day, and still covered with dewdrops." The Sisters smiled at such language from the workman, but he entreated them to wait until the walls were dry. When they raised the drapery three weeks later, their joy was overwhelming—the colors were entirely transformed. The Children of Mary who were assembled, ornamented the blessed corridor, and chanted the first *Magnificat*, which resounded under those silent arches of the cloister, where the modest fresco was destined to receive so solemn a veneration. Being an object of tender devotion only to the religious and their pupils, the *Madonna of the Lilies*, as she was first called, remained in the shade for a short time.

The period of anonymity was ended by two events. The first was the blessing of the image by Pope Pius IX on October 20, 1846, only a few months after His election to the Chair of Peter. The Sovereign Pontiff was visiting the Convent of the Ladies of the Sacred Heart and was shown the fresco. "It was a pious thought," He remarked, "to represent the most holy Virgin at an age when she seems to have been forgotten." He was so pleased by the image, that He not only prayed before it, but solemnly blessed it then and there.