



OUR LADY of the THORN,

February 16

CHALONS-SUR-MARNE, FRANCE

In Chalons, France, on the evening of the Feast of the Annunciation, March 24, 1400, shepherds were tending their flocks in the field, when they noticed a bright light. They went to investigate.

Near the Chapel of St. John the Baptist, they saw a bush fully engulfed in flames. In the middle of the burning bush, was a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Infant Jesus which was unharmed by the fire. The leaves and branches of the bush were also unaffected by the fire.

The miracle continued throughout the night and into the next day. Crowds of people were attracted to the flaming bush. News of the miraculous burning bush reached the Bishop of Chalons. He saw for himself that the bush and statue were in perfect condition though the fire blazed.

Eventually, the fire subsided. The bishop carried the statue into the Chapel of St. John the Baptist so it could be venerated. He ordered a church to be built at the site of the miracle to enshrine the statue.

Our Lady of the Thorn became a very popular pilgrimage site. St. Joan of Arc is said to have visited the elaborate shrine two years before her death. Many miraculous healings have been attributed to Our Lady of the Thorn.

Over 400 years later, Pope Leo XIII crowned the miraculous statue of Our Lady of the Thorn.

"How willingly will Mary hasten to our aid when we need her; with what love will she refresh us, and with what strength sustain us." ~ Pope Leo XIII

This year, we focus on Mary, [the Mediatrix of All Graces](#), the model disciple, who shows us how to receive and bear the Word to the world.

For more on Year 2 preparation, visit: www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubileeccelebration/

