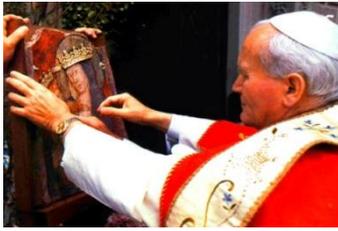


November 2024 is the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Diocese of Arlington-our Golden Jubilee!! We are in Year 2 of preparation for our Jubilee. Theme for Year 2: "My soul rejoices in the Lord!"



## *Our Lady of the Vine/Oak*

*Viterbo, Italy*

*March 10*



In 1417, a man named Manetto was commissioned to paint an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Christ Child for Mastro Baptist Iuzzante. Baptist reverently placed the tile painting on an oak tree at the edge of his property near the main road. The main road was notorious for bandits and Baptist sought the intercession of Our Lady to protect those who traveled it.

The branches and vines of the oak tree grew so that the image was recessed in a natural alcove. Passersby would stop to say a prayer. It remained attached to the oak for 50 years. Pier Domenico Alberti was a hermit who would tell people that a treasure could be found at the oak tree in Viterbo. This prompted a few greedy men to dig at the foot of the oak hoping to find gold. When asked for an explanation, Alberti brought them back to the oak tree and showed them the painting of the Holy Mother and Child, the true treasure.

Alberti took the painting back to his hermitage thinking it would be more secure. The next morning, it was gone. It had returned to its original alcove in the oak tree. Similarly, a woman named Bartolomea took the painting home to pray before the image. The next morning, the painting was mysteriously gone from her home and reappeared at the oak.

In 1467, the plague struck Viterbo. Many deaths occurred and bodies were deserted in the streets. Fear and panic ensued. Devotion to Our Lady of the Vine/Oak was renewed. 30,000 people reportedly gathered at the oak to pray for the intercession of Our Lady. A few days later, the plague ceased. Bishop Pietro Gennari led 40,000 faithful to the foot of the oak to give thanks.

Another extraordinary event is attributed to Our Lady of the Vine/Oak. Chased by enemies of the Faith, a Christian knight fled to the oak and wrapped his arms around the trunk under the image of Our Lady. His pursuers searched right over top of him but could not see him.

A chapel was built at the site of the miracles. Among those who venerated Our Lady of the Vine/Oak were St. Charles Borromeo, St. John of the Cross, St. Ignatius and St. Maximilian Kolbe.

During World War II, Viterbo was bombed by both Allied and Axis powers. January 20, 1944, Germany dropped bombs over the chapel of Our Lady of the Oak. Miraculously, the bombs veered off course and, though they exploded, they did no harm. Three large chunks from the bombs are kept behind the altar.

In 1986, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Our Lady of the Oak the patroness of the Diocese of Viterbo. There is a yearly procession to honor Our Lady of the Oak and to give thanks for the many miracles associated with her intercession.

“Men do not fear a powerful hostile army as the powers of hell fear the name and protection of Mary.”

~St. Bonaventure

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/](http://www.arlingtondiocese.org/goldenjubileeccelebration/)

-From the Office of Religious Education