



Greatest Shrine of All

At left is the statue at Loreto just after Pope John XXIII crowned it...and there is a smile on Our Lady's face.

The largest air tour of the Marian Year left New York in a chartered plane for Rome in September, 1954, under the auspices of the Blue Army of Our Lady. It was also the first organized pilgrimage from the United States to the Holy House of Loreto.

For the Blue Army of Our Lady, it was the beginning of many blessings. Since then more than 2,000 Blue Army pilgrims have journeyed from the U.S. to the Holy House, and most of them have reported afterwards that this was the *highlight of their entire pilgrimage in Europe*, not even excluding the experiences of Shrines like Fatima and Lourdes.

THEY CHOSE LORETO!

Indeed, after that first tour in 1954 we asked each pilgrim privately to name, in order of importance, the places on the pilgrimage which most impressed them. And although the tour included the major basilicas in Rome, the Shrine of the Rosary in Pompeii, La Salette, Paris, Lourdes, Fatima, and other Shrines, most replied: **LORETO.**

This will be a surprise only to those who do not know the wonders of the Holy House—the House in which the Incarnation took place—the House which was preserved to Christianity by a miracle of re-location.

When you tell someone in America that the House of Nazareth “traveled through the air,” and even

re-located three times miraculously until it finally settled on a public road in a grove of laurel trees overlooking the Adriatic Sea, you are likely to be looked upon with raised eyebrows.

YOU JUST KNOW!

But once you have actually been inside the Holy House, you *know* it is true. You don't have to see the foundations “in the air”, with a public road beneath. You do not have to be told about the stone which a Bishop obtained, and then sent back to recover from illness. You do not have to be told of the prophecy of St. Francis, or the vision of St. Nicholas who saw the Holy House come to Loreto. You don't have to know of the scientific arguments, such as the fact that the type of stones in this House are found only in Palestine, and the mortar is of a kind never used in Italy. You do not even have to see the fact that such a House could never have been built without foundations, and that therefore it *must* have been transported miraculously to this place.

THE LITTLE FLOWER

When you touch those walls, when you find yourself in this place which a Pope has described as “the holiest place on earth,” no arguments are needed. *You know.*

And in knowing, you are flooded with the kind of faith that caused the Little Flower to exclaim: “And to think I received the Word made Bread in the Very House where the Word was made Flesh!”

And Our Lady, who loves to have Her children visit Her in Her House, is not outdone in generosity.

THE AMERICAN CHAPEL

For all these centuries She saved one unfinished Chapel—the one very close to the Holy House itself, which was built before the United States was formed, and even before the continent of America was discovered!

While all the other nations of the world at that time were embellishing chapels in the great Basilica which form the sanctuary of the Holy House, this one chapel was saved for a country not yet born—but which has grown in stature throughout the world and which now comes to Loreto with the amalgamated faith of immigrants from all the old countries of Europe.

Blue Army pilgrims asked the privilege to start contributing towards the embellishment of this Chapel, and in 1966 the Reverend Modestus Papi, head of the Universal Congregation of the Holy House, came to America under the auspices of the Blue Army and lectured in the first campaign for membership in the Congregation for this exalted purpose.

How much Our Lady loves us, Her children, to have saved Her house for us to visit! And how much She must love America . . . which was found in a ship bearing Her name and in which almost every nation has been consecrated to Her Immaculate Conception . . .