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THE HOLY SHROUD AT MONTEVERGINE AND ITS DISPLAY OCTOBER 28-29, 1946

by

Giovanni Mangelli

1973

—
(Montevergine, Italy)

From a translation by Gemma Reese, above, who lived in the vicinity of Turin during World War II, and to whom this editor wishes to express special thanks (along with the others noted above). Her translation and her coordination showed great skill and patience, and also, especially when she was reading the Italian of the footnotes, a musical quality of voice which was most delightful. In addition, as the editor learned from her and others, the original monograph appears to have been in Latin prior to the original version of Mangelli's Italian, so that the difficulties were most certainly more strenuous in the translation than otherwise.

*The editor is uncertain whether there are other English versions of this monograph available in the United States or whether the original can be found in any Catholic churches in this country. Those who receive this translation may obtain the Italian Mangelli monograph, in reproduction, at current cost - about two (\$2.) for the 23 printed pages - from this editor upon request. Please include a self-addressed manila envelope and postage. (It should be noted that portions of the footnotes have been reduced by the translator and the editor because of redundancy or excess for the average reader. However, all of the original, and some additional notes, have been inserted. See also the footnote on the following page.)

THE HOLY SHROUD AT MONTEVERGINE AND ITS DISPLAY OCTOBER 28-29, 1946

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Taking advantage of the fact that on November 23, 1973, there will be a new solemn display of the Sacred Shroud, we want to recall briefly in these pages the last extraordinary display of the Shroud, which took place in the Shrine of Montevergine on October 28, 1946, where this precious relic was in the custody of the monks during World War II.

It is a true joy for us to remember what happened that night, not only because it is an interesting page in the history of our shrine and because the monks of Montevergine were the ones responsible for the preservation of one of the most precious relics of Christianity, but especially because on that memorable night of 28 October 1946 we were most fortunate to be present at the display of the Holy Shroud, which would be the last one for the next 27 years.

Considering the importance of this matter and the scant record of it, we desire now to publish the most important documents which refer to that night, that so far have not been published.

1. The moving of the Holy Shroud to Montevergine.*

*See page 18 for sectional headings and their pagination, as well as reference to the ^{three} ~~two~~ illustrations (photographs) not shown herein, together with the editor's postscript.

The Holy Shroud was transferred to Montevergine with the greatest secrecy for reasons that are easy to understand.

Because war had broken out in Europe and Italy was preparing to enter the conflict, King Victor Emanuel III. wanted to insure the safety of this precious relic, the Holy Shroud. First the Shroud was taken from Turin to the Quirinale in Rome. Then the King asked the Holy See to select a place that would be safe from the dangers of the war.

Monsignor Giovanni Battista Montini (the future Pope Paul VI) sent a telegram the 7th of September 1939 to the abbot Giuseppe Ramiro Marccone to ask him to come to Rome at once to the office of the Secretary of State. Once in Rome he was told by Cardinal Luigi Maglioni that Montevergine was considered the safest location for the temporary stay of the Holy Shroud.

Naturally the abbot Marccone did not object to the selection of Montevergine but was very pleased with it. Accordingly, on the 25th of September, 1939, the precious relic was taken by car to Montevergine by Paolo Brusa and Monsignor Giuseppe Gariglio and delivered to the abbot Marccone.

The following was written that day:

Nullius Abbey of Montevergine

OBJECT: Record of consignment and temporary deposit of the Holy Shroud.

In the year 1939, on the 25th day of September, in compliance with the ordinances of His Majesty the King and Emperor, through his Minister, His Excellency the count senator of the Kingdom Piero Acquarone, in compliance with the Holy See, through her senior chaplain Monsignor Giu-

seppe Beccaria, in one of the rooms of the shrine of the Abbey Nullius
Diocesis of Montevergine (in the province of Avellino) His Excellency,
the Most Reverend Father Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone, in the office of
Ordinary Abbot of this Abbey, Monsignor Paolo Brusa, Chaplain of His
Majesty the King and Emperor, in the office of Custodian of the most
Holy Shroud; the Most Reverend Father D. Bernardo Rabasca, Prior of the
shrine, and the Most Reverend Monsignor Giuseppe Gariglio, witnessed
the consignment of the Holy Shroud.

Because of the political situation, it was considered wise to
transfer the blessed Holy Shroud from the chapel in the Royal Palace
in Turin to a place that would be safer, the Shrine of Montevergine.

On the 7th of September, 1939, the silver case containing the Shroud
was placed in a wooden box, closed with screws, lined with white linen
sewn around the borders and tied with a rope that on every knot had a
stamped lead bead with the seal of the count Giovanni Amico di Meane,
Administrator of the Royal house in Turin. On the 8th of September,
1939, this box containing the precious Shroud was accompanied to Rome
by the Chaplain of His Majesty and Custodian of the Holy Shroud, Mon-
signor Paolo Brusa, and the theologian don Giuseppe Gallino, and was
deposited temporarily in the Chapel of Guido Reni inside the Royal Pal-
ace of the Quirinale. From here, on September 25, 1939, after having
made sure that the box was authentic, the Holy Shroud was taken by car
to the shrine of Montevergine to be guarded and to be temporarily kept
there. Monsignor Brusa, Custodian of the Holy Shroud, and Monsignor
Gariglio, were both appointed by the Royal house to escort it.

The box containing the Shroud was 1.4 meters long by .365 of a meter wide by .28 of a meter high. "Reliquarii" was written on it.

The box was given by Monsignor Paolo Brusa, Custodian of the Holy Shroud, to His Excellency, Father Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone, abbot of the shrine, who placed this precious relic under the altar of the "Corretto di Notte" chapel, and locked it there. Present as witnesses were Father Don Bernardo Rabasca and Monsignor Giuseppe Gariglio.

This place was considered the safest for the Shroud and the Abbot of the shrine assumed complete responsibility for its protection.

This relic was to be returned to Turin when His Majesty the King and Emperor ordered it.

We have four copies of the documents that were signed and sealed with the signet of the abbot that day.

One copy is kept by the abbot of Montevergine, one by the senior chaplain of His Majesty the King and Emperor, one by the custodian of the Holy Shroud, and one by the secretary of the Royal House.

Montevergine, 25 September 1939.

Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone, Abbot
Paolo Brusa, Chaplain of His Majesty, Custodian of the Holy Shroud
Don Bernardo Rabasca, Prior
Monsignor Giuseppe Gariglio, Chaplain of His Majesty

Consideration was given to moving the box to an even safer location. On that same September 25, 1939, the following record was written:

L'Abate Ordinario: Record added after the box containing the most Holy Shroud was placed under the altar of the "Corretto di Notte" chapel in the shrine of Montevergine.

Monsignor G. Gariglio and Brusa, appointed by His Majesty the King

and Emperor, accompanied the box containing the precious Shroud to Montevergine and approved the location for the safety of this holy relic.

Taking into consideration that falling bombs could cause very powerful explosions and destruction, even though this box was 88 cm. inside the main stone wall which leans against the mountain, it was decided that for greater precaution, in the event of bomb threats, the box should be placed by the Abbot of Montevergine in an even safer location. A tunnel would be dug out in the rock of the mountain, one hundred meters from the altar of the "Coretto di Notte" chapel and the box would be placed there by the abbot. Entrance to the tunnel would be gained through a corridor inside the monastery without needing to go outside. Once the danger passed, the box would be placed again under the altar of the chapel.

The box would be moved to the tunnel only in case of extreme danger, because it would be unwise to expose it to the humidity there for an extended period of time. The Abbot of Montevergine has full authority to remove the box from the altar into the tunnel whenever he thinks best.

The authority was delegated to him by His Excellency the Senior Chaplain of His Majesty the King and Emperor.

Montevergine, 25 September 1939.

Giuseppe Ramiro Marcone, Abbot
Paolo Brusa, guardian of the Holy Shroud
Bernardo Rabasca, Prior
Monsignor Giuseppe Gariglio, Chaplain of His Majesty.

The Shroud will remain in Montevergine until the dangers of war are over. The monks of the shrine promised to keep this fact secret.(1)

(1) These documents, and other documents relating to the Holy Shroud are found in the living archives in the abbey of Montevergine, III, 4: 1939-60. A transcript of the record in the Annals of the Monastery, III, 136-138. You can compare with other news, the Annals, IV, 197; IX, 243. We have already considered this argument, G. Mongelli, The Shroud at Montevergine, the last showing, . . . October 1966, Torino; Idem, in The Shrine of Montevergine, article 47, December 1966, page 103.

Here we want to give you some more information regarding the Shrine of Montevergine.

2. The place of the deposit: "Coretto da Notte."

In the center of the shrine there is a chapel that is called "Coretto di Notte".*

*Nighttime Choir.

To get to it you first enter the cloister, then a corridor on the left (the one in front of the big reception hall). At the end of the corridor you climb the main steps that take you to the Corridor of the Crucifix /Crocifisso/. This is an elegant and wide hall (43.9 x 6.85 meters) with plaster frames in baroque style and unusual windows. The floor is of yellow orange tiles elegantly outlined in green. You find

the coat of arms of the shrine eight times on this floor.

However, we don't want to consider this hall any further, but rather take the stairs on the right to the "Coretto di Notte" chapel.

We find ourselves now in a narrow, long chapel (18 x 4.25 meters) that has an altar of particular interest and wooden choir stalls on the other three sides of the chapel.

The name of "Coretto di Notte" was given to this chapel because in the past the monks recited psalms here at midnight.

This chapel was erected in 1632 by the abbot Gian Giacomo Giordano (2). Until 1632 every service took place in the chapel of the basilica of Montevergine, which was built of walnut wood and had prec-

(2) About the superior abbot, compare Giovanni Mongelli, History of Montevergine and of the Congregation Verginiana /Congregation of the Monks/, vol. IV, Avellino 1968, pp. 458-495; pp. 505-516; Idem, /etc./.

ious carving dating back to the year 1573. But the 2nd of August, 1629, part of the church was destroyed while they were building an addition.

The abbot at that time, Gian Giacomo Giordano, considered it best to build this chapel "Coretto di Notte" separate from the main building yet connected to it.

It was a great advantage to be able to recite the psalms during the cold nights of the winter months in a smaller place, easier to heat. It was especially a great blessing for the older monks and for the sick ones.

In this chapel the choir stalls are of walnut and have beautiful carvings. They have carved on them the date - 1632.

But the thing that is of most interest to us in this place is the altar, under which the precious Shroud was placed.

In 1939 the altar was as follows: The altar piece was the Madonna of S. Guglielmo, a valuable painting from the end of the twelfth century, which depicts the Madonna in her maternity and royalty.(3) Since that time this painting has been moved to the abbey's museum.

(3) About this picture of the Virgin, see P. Toesca, History of the Medieval Italian Art, II, Torino 1965, p. 995, n. 33; A. O. Quintavalle, Contribution to the Study of the Romantic in Campania (taken from the magazine Crisopoli, II fasc. I, Jan.-Feb. 1934), Parma 1934, p.10; L. F. Vignanelli, The Virgin of S. Guglielmo, in the Monastery of Montevergine, article XLVI, n. 1-2 (May-June 1965), p. 6; G. Mongelli, The Madonna of Montevergine (historical research on the author of the painting), Avellino 1964 (estratto da Economia Irpina) /probably a geographical reference/, p. 4; again, The author of the image of the "Madonna of Montevergine" through the life of this historical critic (taken from the Act of the National Conference of historical studies that was promoted by the Society of History of the Land of the Labor, 26-31 Oct. 1966), Rome, De Luca publisher, 1967, pp. 440-442. You would think that it is like dreaming with your eyes open and you feel like this painting was done by a painter that was nonexistent named Gualtiero.

At the back of the altar there were two wooden columns dating from

early 1800's: Everything was very harmoniously created and was conducive to the right atmosphere for prayer and communication with God. (4)

(4) The altar in which the holy Shroud was placed remained there until 1962. In that year, the altar had a profound transformation, because the altar^{/that/} was made of wood was replaced by one made of marble that before was in the chapel of S. Benedetto, which had been destroyed during the rebuilding of the sanctuary. And in the place of the Madonna of S. Guglielmo (that was transferred to the abbey's museum) there is an oil canvas representing S. Benedetto, and this oil canvas was painted by the Neapolitan Carlo La Barbera, and was done in 1880. So that instead of having all this decoration of wood on the altar,^{we have} the decoration and carvings of marble, and this was done by Vitantonio Pastorale (1698-1701, 1710-1713).

From this we can understand why Monsignor Brusa and Gariglio were perfectly satisfied with the choice of this location for the Shroud. Naturally, also, Cardinal Maglione was very interested in this event because he was the one who had suggested this shrine for the safe-keeping of the Shroud. Two days later, on the 27th of September, 1939, he came to the monastery accompanied by the bishop of Pozzuoli, Monsignor Alfonso Castaldo (who became cardinal later on) by his brother, who was a priest, and by two of his nephews. He wanted to personally view the place where the Shroud had been placed. He too was content with the location and with the precautionary measures that had been taken.

There is a document which speaks of these precautionary measures. It speaks of a tunnel in Montevergine that could even be a safe place to safeguard the Shroud. It related that one doesn't have to leave the shrine to enter this tunnel and that the Shroud would be placed in it only in case of emergency because the tunnel is quite damp and humid.

We need to understand why this tunnel was built. From the beginning of the 12th century until 1954, during the lenten season all the monks, guests, pilgrims, either in good health or sick, were obliged in the shrine itself and in a surrounding area of 100 meters to follow a very strict diet, without the use of any meats, eggs, or milk products. This was called "the tradition of the lean." (5)

(5) To explain this tradition of the lean in Montevergine, you need to compare Mongelli, History cited above, vol. II, pp. 772 and following. Considering the older monks who have written about this tradition, they spoke more profusely about the things that took place during the centuries once the monks started transgressing this rule: cf. F. Renda, Vita et obitus sanctissimi confessoris Guilielmi Vercellensis, Napoli 1581; and G. G. Giordano, Annals of Montevergine, Napoli 1649, p. 206, 319; M. De Masellis, Iconology of the Mother of God, Napoli 1777, p. 8; A. Mastrullo, op. cit., pp. 8, 72; M. Iacuzio, A little pamphlet of the annals and history of the famous sanctuary of Montevergine, Napoli, 1777, p. 8; also a man that gives a lot about this subject is O. De Lucis, Supplement to the History of Montevergine (Ms. 1619 /apparently not published/). Also this same thing can be found in the stories of the monks like Paolino Sandulli, A. M. Mancini, etc.

To escape the rules of this uncompromising tradition, they erected another building, first temporary and then permanent, on the eastern side, where the monks and their guests could go and eat something more substantial outside the restricted area.

This building was first dedicated in 1794. At the end of the year 1800 another building was erected on the opposite side because the first one was not functional. This new building was connected to the monastery by a tunnel 145 meters long. This tunnel was easily reached from the monastery. So in case of extreme danger in a few minutes the precious relic could be moved to a safe place and kept in the tunnel until the danger passed.

This is the reason that Cardinal Maglione was so pleased with this location for the shroud.

3. The display of 28 October 1946.

Officially only the abbot Marccone, the prior D. Bernardo Rabasco, the vicar D. Anselmo Tranfaglia (who later on became the head abbot succeeding Marccone), the winter superior of the monastery, and the sacristan father knew where the shroud had been deposited. Actually these were the people responsible for moving the Shroud in case of danger.

All these kept the secret jealously, but something happened that put others on the track to discover the content of the wooden box that had been deposited in the monastery. We prefer to quote what father Federico Renzullo, a religious man of that time, who happened to be our guest, wrote about it:

"One day in Montevergine there was an unusual bustle, a coming

and going back and forth, a mysterious and subdued whispering. But nobody that day realized what had taken place." After naming the people who know what had taken place, he continued to write: "Meanwhile, an old priest Paolo Brusa, keeper of the Holy Shroud who came unexpectedly to Montevergine, wanted to celebrate mass at the altar of the chapel of the 'Coro di Notte.' The other monks who attended the celebration of the mass understood that the old priest had celebrated the Mass of the Holy Shroud. But what truly gave it away was due to the fact that not only the Mass was celebrated in an unusual place in the monastery but that the priest was very moved and cried during the whole celebration of the Mass." In concluding Father Renzullo says: "When you read this, dear priest, if you do read it, know that your tears gave away the secret. Know also that those monks that day understood not only that you were the guardian of the Shroud appointed by the King, but also that your faith and love were the magnets that moved again the precious cloth to Turin."(6)

(6) F. Renzullo, The Rubies of the Passion, Bari 1950, pp. 243-246.

Nevertheless, the secret was kept and the faithful pilgrims that during those years went to the Shrine of Montevergine didn't know that besides the venerated image of the Virgin the sacred Shroud of Turin was also kept there.

At the end of the war, after the constitutional referendum, Italy became a republic and the kings of the house of Savoy had to leave the throne and their country. What would happen to the Holy Shroud? What

arrangements would be made about it? Would the Shroud be brought back to Turin or would it be placed somewhere else? Would Montevergine become its permanent residence after having been its temporary one? These were the questions that the monks were asking, especially the priests with greater authority, who were more interested and felt more responsible toward the sacred deposit.

On the 10th of June, 1946, a letter arrived from the House of Savoy ordering the return of the Holy Shroud to the city of Turin. The proper ecclesiastical authorities were in charge of taking the Shroud back to Turin, whenever they thought the proper time had come.(7)

(7) In the letter to the cardinal Maurilio Fossati, of June 10, 1946, King Umberto II was writing; "The things that have happened induce me today to communicate to Your Holy Eminence that it is my intention that this precious relic remain sacred and inalienable property of my House /the House of Savoy/ - From now I give my full authority that this Shroud will be placed again to its original location in Turin, in the Chapel that has its name. (In Avellino III, 4).

This letter ended all questions. Truly it was the best solution that the King of Italy could have taken regarding that very precious relic.

When the Shroud was taken to Montevergine, the ecclesiastical authority of Turin didn't have anything to do with its move, but only the guardians and the chaplains of the court; now, instead, for its re-

turn to the metropolis of Piedmont, all depended on the orders of the Cardinal Maurilio Fossati, archbishop of Turin. He thought that the end of October would be a good time to bring the Holy Shroud back to Turin. (8)

(8) The 4th of October 1946 the Cardinal Fossati was writing, among other things, to the abbot Marcone: "I had to postpone the execution of this order twice while the Holy Father is absent from Rome. But now I think that in a few days the Holy Father will come back to the Vatican and I plan to come to Rome for a visit this month. So I want to let you know that, taking advantage of this trip to Rome the end of October, I would like to come not as an official visit but as a private visit, with Monsignor Brusa, Custodian of the Holy Shroud. I would like to come and get the precious relic from the monastery to take it back, always in the greatest privacy, to its Chapel in Turin." Then he continued: "To You, Most Reverend Abbot, and to your religious monks, I extend all my gratitude for the hospitality given to the Holy Shroud, and I would be very happy to visit the well-renowned Monastery, to which I have been insistently invited since 1914 by my friend the Abbot Grasso but now I am mourning his loss." (Avellino III, 4).

The Cardinal Fossati came personally to Montevergine on the afternoon of the 28th of October. At that time only a few of the priests were there. The others had already left for the abbey of Loreto.

Because the cardinal was so loving and kind, the prior D. Roberto d'Amore (now abbot of the monastery), and another priest of Montevergine had the courage to ask to see the precious relic, which they had kept for so many years. The cardinal agreed with a smile, and answered immediately, "Yes,

certainly, you deserve it. You have held it in custody so well." (9)

(9) Of this time we have a clear note in the record at the time, 29 October 1946, of the Cardinal Fossati, Abbot Marccone, and Paolo Brusa, in these words: "Adhering to the desire expressed by the holy monks to be able to see the Most Holy Shroud, his Holy Excellency the Cardinal agrees to show it because he was so grateful to these fathers for having kept the Holy Shroud all these years of the war. His Excellency the Archbishop, on the following morning after thanking the reverend abbot for his jealous custody . . . having celebrated the Holy Mass on the Altar of the Madonna, left the shrine of Montevergine, taking with him the Sacred Relic" (Avellino III, 4).

As soon as the cardinal agreed to their request, the news of the viewing of the Shroud spread like lightning. One would have thought somebody had given an alarm. They phoned the other monks who were in Loreto and with the cars of friends from Avellino they came rapidly to the monastery.

While the monks were coming from Loreto, other friends of the monks, well-known personalities like professor Gedda and famous exponents of the Catholic Action, arrived at the monastery.

In the big reception hall a long table was prepared, covered with altar cloths and laces. Then the Sacred Shroud was taken along, preceded by a procession singing the hym, The Banner of the King Is Going Forth.

After they placed the sacred relic on the table, before showing it, professor Gedda gave an interesting talk with slides to prepare the

minds of the viewers.

At the conclusion of the talk the seals of authenticity of the box were broken and the extraordinary viewing of the Shroud began. The viewers surrounded the long tables at the center of the room.

Professor Gedda had explained exhaustively every particular regarding the Shroud, according to the latest scientific findings.

Around midnight ^{the} Cardinal opened with his own hands the first, second and third boxes. This last one was of sterling, covered with enamel, with pictures representing the passion of Jesus.

Everybody had been warned ahead of time not to touch the sacred relic.* There was great tension and expectancy in the room. Finally,

*Subsequent to these times of course this prescription was loosened, as during the elaborate scientific examinations reported by Kenneth E. Stevenson and Gary R. Habermas, Verdict on the Shroud: Evidence for the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981; but it is still an appropriate and necessary precaution if the Shroud's condition is to be preserved as well as possible. Its custody in the Turin chapel through the years had always been one of attentive care, with very few public exhibitions of it before World War II.

the precious relic was placed on a piece of new material, 5 meters long, and everybody there was able to see it.

Professor Gedda, with a wooden pointer, but without touching the Holy Shroud, was indicating the most important details.

The cardinal was stressing the privilege the community of Monte-

verGINE was experiencing, which was not only extraordinary but completely unplanned. Even the fortunate keepers of the Shroud in Turin had seen the Shroud only on very rare occasions.

Everybody was very grateful to the cardinal.

All adored and gazed upon the Shroud at length; then it was rolled */folded?/ again and placed back in the box, which was properly sealed.

At 1:30 a.m. the ceremony was over.

All the ceremony was filmed.

After the display the box containing the Shroud was placed on the altar of the Chapel of the Madonna (now called The Chapel of the Crucifix). There the cardinal at 5:30 a.m. celebrated the Holy Mass.

At the time of departure the sacred relic was taken by a procession of priests to the car, which would take it first to Rome and then to Turin.

The Holy Shroud was not shown again for 27 years.(10)

(10) Compare the Annals of the Monastery, IV, 197, Bulletin ecclesiastic of Montevergine, 1946, pp. 35-36, 39-40. We want to bring to you attention^{that} at the showing at Montevergine, beside the monks and the doctor Luigi Gedda, that we named before, who at the time was president of the catholic men, there was also professor Carlo Carreto, president of the Catholic Male Youth of the Catholic Action, with other leaders of the Catholic Action.

The seven years, one month, and four days* that the Holy Shroud stayed in Montevergine established a special tie between the Shrine

*Often incorrectly stated as a period of six years by authors who have

not had the opportunity of seeing the monograph in hand, now being read.

and the holy relic. In 1950 in Rome there was a study conference on the Holy Shroud. The abbot Marcone participated in some of the meetings; then, the 4th of May of that same year, he went to Turin where this particular conference was closed.(11)

(11) Compare the ecclesiastical bulletins of Montevergine, 1950, p. 42; L. Gedda, Showing of the Holy Shroud at Montevergine, 27, n. 7-8 (Nov-Dec. 1946), pages 44-45.

We will follow with great interest the next display of the Holy Shroud on the 23rd of November 1973.

Montevergine will always have a special place in the history of the Holy Shroud, not only for hosting it during several years but especially for the extraordinary and memorable display on the night of the 28th of October 1946.

The annals of Montevergine record all these events.

In any case, the monks of Montevergine will always be grateful for the privilege they had of keeping the Shroud for several years and being able to see it so closely - something that very, very few people have been able to do at any time.

Also in this we see a sign of the blessings of the Virgin of Montevergine toward her fortunate guardians and a manifestation of her mission in the world: ad Jesum per Mariam!

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Three pages of the original are photographic illustrations (not included here), as follows:

- The face of the Lord in the Sacred Shroud.
- The Coretto da Notte where the Holy Shroud was kept in Montevergine from the 25th of September 1939 to the 28th of October 1946.
- The sanctuary of Montevergine - general view.

Considering that the Allied invasion of Italy began at the toe of the peninsula (from Sicily, in early September 1943) and was soon followed by another thrust (at Salerno) a few days later, it is noteworthy that neither the retreating German forces nor the invading American and British ever bothered the monastery of Montevergine. These bitter days of fighting occurred across the whole instep, ankle and leg of the peninsula; they were conducted both by extremely well-trained German troops and by determined but less than well-coordinated, and thus possibly more destructive assaults, by the invaders by sea, harbor, town, road and rugged surrounding mountainous terrain. In fact a month later, as the Allied advance continued up the peninsula and as the Germans gave way grudgingly at every possible redoubt they could manage, the monastery at Cassino became one of the fiercest battles of the whole campaign south of Rome, the stand at Cassino foremost. So that

the sparing of Montevergine throughout these bitter contests of arms is itself rather remarkable. Apparently, Montevergine sat supreme and peaceful in its mountain fast throughout this period. If war histories mention her at all, this editor hasn't found a reference to the fact.

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Dothan, Alabama
October 1982.