

# The Reign of Mary

VOLUME 39

*De Maria Nunquam Satis*

ISSUE NO. 44.



- **To Promote Faithful Obedience to the Legitimate Teaching Magisterium of the One, True Catholic Church Founded by Jesus Christ...**
- **To Preserve Without Compromise or Dilution the Traditions and Doctrines of the One, True Church...**
- **To Work and Pray for the Triumph of Mary Our Queen and the Resultant Reign of Christ Our King...**

**T**here shall always be that enmity mentioned in Scripture between the Christian forces of the Woman (Mary) and the Anti-Christ forces of the serpent (Lucifer). And while in our present day those forces of Anti-Christ (Freemasonry, Communism, Atheistic Materialism, Liberalism and its Protestant offspring, Apostate Modernism, Socialism, Militant Islam, etc.) are gaining universal victories in establishing the reign of the Luciferian brotherhood throughout the world, we who fight beneath the standard of the Cross know that ultimately Mary, Mother of God and Immaculate Queen of the Universe, will "crush the proud head of the Serpent" and as the Luciferian legions (both human and demonic) are cast into the abyss of darkness, Her Immaculate Heart will triumph and there shall be the universal

**REIGN OF MARY  
and Her Divine Son,  
CHRIST THE KING!**



**MARY, IMMACULATE QUEEN  
OF THE UNIVERSE, SPOUSE OF  
THE HOLY GHOST, MEDIATRIX  
OF ALL GRACES; TRIUMPH AND  
REIGN IN THE NAME OF JESUS,  
AND FOR THE LOVE OF JESUS,  
NOW AND FOREVER.  
AMEN.**

## OUR LADY OF LIESSE

("CAUSE OF OUR JOY")

Liesse, Picardy, France

Twelfth Century



St. John Baptist de la Salle and 12 of his brothers renew their vows of obedience before Our Lady of Liesse.

Long before pilgrims directed their steps to Lourdes, the shrine of Our Lady of Liesse was regarded as the most popular pilgrimage site in France.

Dating back to the twelfth century, the story of the statue's origin has been preserved not only in France but also in the Holy Land, where it mysteriously appeared during the time of the Crusades. The traditional account of its history is as follows.

When the King of Jerusalem, Foulques of Anjou, rebuilt the fortress of Bersabee to

protect his kingdom against the incursions of the Moslems, he placed it in the care of the Knights of St. John. One day some of the knights were caught in an ambush, and in spite of their valiant efforts at defending themselves, they were captured and secured with chains. After they had been taken to Egypt, it was discovered that three of the knights, who were brothers, were members of the prestigious house of Eppes in Picardy, France.

Seeing their proud bearing, and learning of their willingness to die rather than deny their Faith, the Sultan was determined to have them renounce their belief in Jesus Christ and turn instead to Mohammed. After learning that the

three remained staunch in their Faith despite the cruel conditions of their imprisonment, the Sultan tried a different approach. This time he offered them gold, their freedom, and a position of honor. But instead of relenting, the pious knights seemed inspired by the Holy Ghost to defend their Christian Faith by preaching to their guards and to all who would listen to them.

As a final effort to achieve his evil desire, the Sultan sent his daughter, Princess Ismerie, who was a virtuous maiden, to warn the knights about the frightful punishments reserved for them. The knights listened respectfully to the princess, thanked her for her concern, and spoke to her of their beliefs. They spoke in such a persuasive manner that the princess began to reflect seriously on all that had been told to her. That night she dreamed of Christ and His Blessed Mother.

During that same night a resplendent statue of the Blessed Mother was brought to the prisoners by angels. Upon learning of the statue and realizing that it could not have entered the prison except in a supernatural fashion, the young princess was converted.

One night she released the prisoners after bribing the guards with gold and fled with the knights from her father's palace. After crossing the Nile the fugitives set their course for Alexandria, hoping to conceal themselves for a time in the Coptic monasteries of St. Macanus. After walking for some hours, the princess was exhausted and wanted to rest. Despite the danger, the knights decided to keep guard over her and seated themselves at a respectful distance. The princess soon fell asleep. The knights, although struggling against drowsiness, nevertheless succumbed to a profound slumber. It is not known how long they slept. The eldest of the brothers was the first to awaken to the singing of birds and a soft glow of sunlight. Then, looking at the landscape with great surprise, he realized he was no longer under palm trees by the Nile, but under an oak beside a gentle brook. The members of the little party were bewildered, but a passing shepherd who was driving his sheep to pasture relieved their confusion by stating that the castle in the distance belonged to the knights' father and that they were indeed *in France*.

The knights and the princess had fallen asleep in Egypt—only to awaken in France. Much to their relief, the little statue of the Blessed Virgin had traveled with them, and it was for her that they built a handsome church to enshrine the statue in Liesse. The Moslem princess was baptized by the Bishop in the nearby Cathedral of Laon in 1134.

Historical accounts assure us that the statue was indeed brought to France from the Middle East by three

lords of Eppes, Knights of St. John of Jerusalem.

Since this account is so unusual and is sometimes met with skepticism, we might mention here two instances recorded in Holy Scripture where a similar transport occurred. The first was experienced by Habacuc; he was told by an angel to carry food to Daniel, who was then in the lions' den at Babylon. "And Habacuc said: Lord, I never saw Babylon, nor do I know the den. And the angel of the Lord took him by the top of his head, and carried him by the hair of his head, and set him in Babylon over the den... And Daniel arose and ate. And the angel of the Lord presently set Habacuc again in his own place." (*Daniel 14:33-39*).

The other instance of unusual flight takes place in the Acts of the Apostles (*Chapter 8:26-40*) when the Apostle Philip was instructing an Ethiopian eunuch. As they went along the way, the eunuch saw a body of water and asked to be baptized. Then: "When they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more... But Philip was found in Azotus; and passing through, he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea."

The miracles performed by Our Lady at Liesse were so many that the shrine attracted the attention of countless royal personalities who visited and signed the registry of pilgrims. These notables include the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Bourbon, Prince Henry, Louis the Duke of Orleans, King Charles VII, King Rene, Louis XI, Francis I, Henry II, Charles IX, Queen Mary of Medicis, Louis XIII, Anne of Austria, Louis XIV and many others.

Unfortunately, the costly gifts offered to Our Lady by these nobles and other wealthy visitors also attracted the attention of thieves and of the anti-Catholic Huguenots, who pillaged the shrine. The original statue was destroyed during the French Revolution, but the medieval basilica at Liesse remained a center of devotion to the Mother of God and a new statue was installed and crowned there in 1857.

The shrine of Our Lady of Liesse is still very popular, despite the many French shrines to Our Lady which also vie for the attention of the devout.

## **THE DEADLY PERIL THE WORLD FACES**

### **VI. OTTOMAN/TURKISH EMPIRE**

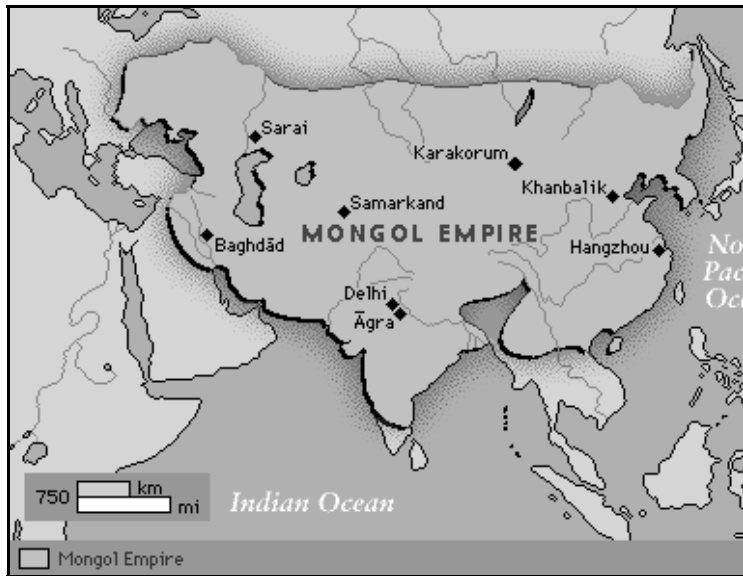
(1300 - 1922)

Many great movements of history took place during this period that affected both the Islamic Empire and the Christian West.

### The Mongol Invasion of Muslims

The Mongol tribes united under chief Temujin in A.D. 1206. He was renamed Ghengis Khan, which means "Supreme Ruler." He charged across the Steppes and over the Caucasus Mountains to take on the Muslim Empire.

The formidable Mongol cavalry and fierce warriors were virtually unstoppable. By 1258, the "golden horde," led by Ghengis Khan's grandson Hulagu Khan, destroyed the Muslim Abbasid Khaliphate of Baghdad as well as the Seljuk Turk sultanate in Asia Minor.



The Mongols<sup>1</sup> (also known as Tartars) posed a tremendous threat to Asia, the Middle East and Europe. They were finally defeated by Muslim Mamelukes at the Battle of 1260.

The greatest significance of this is that the Mongol invasion drove the Ottoman Turks out of Central Asia into Asia Minor, and this event created the circumstances needed for the Muslim Ottoman Turks to take control of the Middle East from the Arabs.

### Origin of the Ottoman Turks

After the Mongols had passed, a young Turkish mercenary named Othman gathered some of the shattered Seljuk Turk forces together and began to impose order amid ruin. Othman slowly extended his martial law through Asia Minor. After many years of struggle he created the only kind of state feasible amid the wreckage left by the Mongols—a military dictatorship of which he became the first sultan.

In 1288, Othman, the first sultan of all Turks, formed the Othman Muslim Dynasty. It soon became known by its variant name—the Ottoman Empire. Their leaders were called Sultans instead of Khaliphs. It should be noted, that the Ottoman Turks were not, and never con-

sidered themselves to be, part of the Arab world; although they too were infected with the Arabic-Muslim hatred of Christians and Jews through the Koran and the Muslim traditions which they embraced.

For the next six centuries, thirty-seven descendants of the house of Othman or Ottoman ruled the Empire. It became one of the largest and richest in history.

### Rise to Power

After the threat of the Mongols had passed, the Ottomans turned their fighting machine toward the Christian civilizations in the West.

The first major onslaught was in 1291, when the Ottomans appeared before the last Christian city of Palestine, Saint-Jean d'Acre, and attacked it with 120,000 men. The 25,000 Christians who defended the city resisted with heroic valor; they filled the breaches in the walls with stakes and bags of cotton and wool, and communicated by sea with King Henry II, who brought them help from Cyprus. However, on May 23, the Ottomans made a final attack and penetrated into the town, and the Christian defenders had to flee in their ships. The strongest opposition was offered by the Templars, the garrison of whose fortress held out ten days longer, only to be completely annihilated. In July the last Christian town of Palestine capitulated, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem ceased to exist. The Crusaders withdrew all their forces from the Middle East. The Knights of St. John, who still possessed the crusading spirit, withdrew to Rhodes, hoping thereby to provide a line of defense against further Turkish raids into Western Europe.

The Ottomans continued their westward march and captured Ephesus in 1308, Nicomedia in 1328, and Nicea in 1330. In 1356, the Ottomans captured Gallipoli (part of present day Turkey, of World War I fame) and thereby intercepted the primary trading route to Constantinople.

In 1362, Peter I, King of Cyprus, went west in the hope of reviving the Christian princes to form a new crusade against this continuous onslaught. He received a magnificent welcome from Pope Urban V and everywhere was tendered fair promises of aid. However, when he set out to do battle in 1365, he was accompanied by hardly any but his own forces. Despite all this, he achieved some military successes; but after another unsuccessful attempt to rally the Christian princes to the cause, he was assassinated in his own country.

The Ottomans continued their march northward and westward. A battle of present day significance was the Battle of Kosovo. Kosovo was the center of the Serbian Kingdom, full of Serbian Eastern Orthodox churches and monasteries. The battle took place on St. Vitus' Day,

June 15, 1389; and while historians are in conflict about the particulars of the battle, whether the Ottomans won or whether it was essentially a draw, the final outcome is certain – the enslavement of the Serbs to the Muslim Ottomans for five centuries.

In the year 1444, the 21-year-old king of Poland, Ladislaus III<sup>2</sup>, was the only European leader who dared to fight against the assault of Islam invading Europe. He led a mixed Christian army consisting mainly of Polish and Hungarian troops (the Hungarian troops were led by Janos Hunyadi – governor of Hungary) with some detachments of Bulgarians, Czechs, Germans, papal knights, Romanians and Old Russians.

The small European army of 30,000 marched to the relief of the Christians who were being abysmally oppressed by the Islamic Ottomans. At Varna (a Bulgarian fortress on the Black Sea) they met with a numerically superior force of 120,000 Ottoman Turks, supported by their Arab vassals and transported from Asia to Europe by French and Italian military fleets.

When the Christians became aware of the location and number of the Ottomans, they held a council. Ladislaus and Hunyadi argued that they would be ashamed to give up the campaign that they had started for Christ's sake. Hunyadi closed his discourse by saying "To escape is impossible, to surrender is unthinkable. Let us fight with bravery and honor our arms." And bravely and honorably they did fight, until Ladislaus, going against Hunyadi's advice, made a military blunder and lost his life as a consequence. Upon his death the Polish army became disorganized and in turn was smashed by the Muslims. The Christians lost the battle. Almost one half of their soldiers were slain, and the prisoners were mercilessly slaughtered or sold into slavery. The head of King Ladislaus was cut off and sent to the capitol of the Ottoman empire, where Muslim women and children sang songs, danced and praised Allah at the sight of the decapitated head.

Although the Christians lost this battle, the Muslims were so badly shattered and daunted by the small Christian army that they were unable to use their strategic advantage and continue advancing into Central Europe.

### The Fall of Constantinople

The city of Constantinople, once the glorious capitol of the East and the largest and richest metropolis in the known world, was in grave peril, probably in just punishment for its many sins.

Blessed Constantine made Constantinople (hence the name) the capitol of the Roman Empire, and while the popes continued to reign from Rome, the emperors

reigned from Constantinople. But after centuries of conflict between the popes and the emperors and their often puppet patriarchs,<sup>3</sup> Pope St. Leo III, in crowning St. Karl the Great emperor, effectually and permanently transferred the "Holy Roman Empire" from the East to the West in 800 A.D. Further driving a wedge between the East and the West was the fact that in 891 schism began to break out in Byzantine Empire<sup>4</sup>, until it culminated in a final break from the Catholic Church in 1054, known as the Greek Schism. This explains, but does not justify, the pillage of Constantinople by the largely western Crusaders in 1204 and was part of the reason why the West was deaf to Constantinople's pleas for help against a common enemy.

At the Council of Ferrara-Florence in 1438-39, the reunion of the Greek schismatics with the Catholic Church was finally realized. But even after this major event, help from the papacy, the Italian City republics and the Christian monarchs had been slow to materialize. In 1452, the papal legate, Cardinal Isidore arrived in the city with a body of archers, recruited and paid for by the papacy. The Cardinal then celebrated the official union of the Latin and Greek Churches in the cathedral of Hagia Sophia on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Many of the Greek inhabitants of the city were not pleased because they hated the Catholic Church and sacrilegiously proclaimed that they would rather see the turban, not the tiara, rule over their city.

In 1446 Janos Hunyadi had attempted to come to the assistance of Constantinople, but was beaten at Kosovo. Constantinople was now surrounded and all routes of help, by land or by sea, were in the hands of the enemy.

The Byzantines were doing all they possibly could to defend their city. In 1451, Emperor Constantine XI sent numerous appeals to the West for soldiers, but his pleas mainly fell upon deaf ears. He also realized that without the latest technology, particularly cannon technology, his empire was doomed. Thus he hired a "Christian" engineer from Hungary to build cannons for them; but being unable to fully pay him, this "Judas" offered his services to the Muslims, who were happy to pay what he asked.

The turncoat produced for the Muslims the largest cannon ever made at that time, a 29 foot-long one which could fire enormous stones weighing as much as 1,300 pounds. It would prove to be deadly.

The inhabitants of Constantinople were encouraged when two Genoese ships, carrying about 700 men, braved through the Ottoman blockade and arrived. But that was the extent of aid they would receive.

The cannon bombardment commenced on April 11, 1453, as the 200,000 Muslim soldiers surrounded the city

being defended by a measly 7,000 Christian soldiers. The Muslims made their morning prayers and then advanced with castanets, tambourines, cymbals and terrifying war cries. In response to the Muslims' percussive noise, the Emperor ordered the bells of the city to be rung, and from the numerous Churches the tolling of bells inspired the Christians to greater zeal. Records show that the sound of the Church bells summoned the non-combatants, priests, monks, nuns, women and children to collect the crosses and holy icons and bring them out to bless the city. Women also fought among the men and even children threw bricks and paving stones at the Muslims once they were inside the city.

Forty-six days later the "Judas" cannon and other weaponry allowed the Muslims to breach the walls and gates, and the besiegers came bursting in from all sides. An eyewitness of the event described it thus: "At this moment of confusion, which happened at sunrise, our omnipotent God came to His most bitter decision and decided to fulfill all the prophecies, as I have said, and at sunrise the Turks entered the city near San Romano, where the walls had been razed to the ground by their cannon ... anyone found was put to the scimitar, women and men, old and young, of any conditions." This butchery lasted for 3 days accompanied by unspeakable excesses of cruelty and debauchery.



Constantinople being bombarded by Muslim cannons.

Emperor Constantine fell like a hero at the gate of San Romanus. Constantine's loyal secretary recorded the following: "On Tuesday, May 29<sup>th</sup>, early in the day, the sultan took possession of our city; in this time of capture my last master and emperor, Lord Constantine, was killed. I was not at his side at that hour, but had been inspecting another part of the city according to his orders... What did my late lord the emperor not do publicly and privately in his efforts to gain some aid for his house, for the Christians, and for his own life? Did he ever think that it was possible and easy for him to abandon the city,

if something happened? ... Who knew of our emperor's fastings and prayers, both his own and those of priests whom he paid to do so; of his services to the poor and of his increased pledges to God, in the hope of saving his subjects from the Turkish yoke? Nevertheless, God ignored his offerings, I know not why or for what sins, and men disregarded his efforts, as each individual spoke against him as they pleased."

The Greeks' sacrilegious prayer had been answered – the turban ruled the city, the sultan rode his horse into St. Sophia and transformed it into a mosque, and Emperor Constantine XI's head was solemnly presented to the Mohammed the Conqueror (Sultan Mohammed II). Even the name of the city was changed to Istanbul. Constantinople is no more.

### The Battle of Belgrade

The fall of Constantinople sent shock waves across Europe. Pope Nicholas V tried to rally Christian Europe against this new Muslim threat but was unsuccessful. Upon his death in March, 1455, the Cardinals turned to the Spaniard Alfonso Borgia, who had already shown a strong desire to stop the Muslim march. He took the name Calixtus III.

Almost immediately after his election he issued a solemn proclamation to all Christian lands calling for a new Crusade. He called into his office trusted Cardinals and Bishops. "Go, you to the Holy Roman Emperor, you to the Duke of Burgundy, you to the King of France, you to the Duke of Naples. Tell them that we are launching a Crusade, that we must have gold to finance it, men to fight it, leaders to ride at the head of the army. Tell them that they must forget the disagreements they have with each other. They must unite in God's cause. During the past years we Christians have become weak. We care more for wealth than for honor. We fight each other instead of our common enemies. This Crusade can put an end to all of that. If Christian princes will unite around the Cross, we can make our people better Christians, we can become more holy, more devoted to Christ. This Crusade will not only rid us of an enemy; it will unite us as friends." Calixtus' voice was powerful. He summoned all the strength in his 80-year-old body to help these men who would be His representatives to see the Crusade as He saw it, so that they could persuade the Christian princes to join.

The messengers left on their missions, but Calixtus did not sit idly by. He began the construction of a papal fleet to lead the naval battle against the Turks. He ordered the selling of papal jewels and other valuable possessions to raise money for the Crusade. He sent

letter after letter to all parts of Europe, explaining, pleading, and encouraging Christian men to enlist in the Crusade. The previous Pope had been a lover of all forms of art; He had hired many craftsmen. Now Calixtus set the painters and embroiderers to making banners, the sculptors to making stone cannon balls.

The representatives returned. Replies came in to His letters. They made promises but the promises were not kept. They made excuses. They thought of reasons for delays. More messengers arrived with the alarming news that the Turks were preparing a huge attack on Hungary. Calixtus thundered: "Only cowards fear danger. The palm of glory grows nowhere but on the battlefield!" But King Alonso of Naples, who had promised to lead the sea attack against the Muslims, instead led an attack against Genoa, a Christian state. The Duke of Burgundy, who had promised to lead the land attack, did not stir from his castle. The promised contributions did not arrive. The Pope sold the silverware from His table. One day gilt saltcellars appeared at a meal. Calixtus roared, "Away, away with these things. Take them for the Turks. Earthenware will do quite as well for Me."

In June 1456, the Turkish drums were beating. Mohammed the Conqueror was leading an army of 150,000 men toward Hungary, the last Christian outpost before all of Europe would be laid bare to the Muslims. His army besieged Belgrade<sup>5</sup>. Mohammed boasted that the city would surrender within two weeks.

The people in Belgrade were in despair. They felt abandoned; but they were not. Calixtus sent His trusted friend Cardinal John Carvajal to Belgrade. With him came St. John Capistrano, who at the time was 70 years old and described by the future Pius II as "small, old, dry, thin, wasted, nothing but skin and bones." Also accompanying them was Janos Hunyadi, governor of Hungary, whom Pope Calixtus III called the "Shield of Christianity."<sup>6</sup> The three Johns knew what to do. The Hungarian king and his nobles had shamefully fled in terror of the Turks. "The Turks are coming!" was a cry that could be heard with increasing frequency throughout the terrified country. Whole villages were being destroyed, thousands killed, and thousands of others, including women and children, taken captive to be sold in the slave markets of the Ottoman Empire. But Janos Hunyadi raised an army of 7,000 men at his own expense. Cardinal Carvajal procured transport and provisions. St. John Capistrano preached in the towns and villages and gathered an army of poor citizens and peasants, monks, hermits, and students, armed with axes, pikes, flails, and pitchforks. In Rome, Calixtus appealed to Divine Aid, since humans had failed Him. On the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul (June

29), He called for "processions in every diocese in order to pray that the threatened Turkish invasion might be averted." Every priest was required to deliver the following prayer in every Mass: "Almighty, everlasting God, to Whom all power belongs, and in Whose hands are the rights of all nations, protect Thy Christian people and crush by Thy power the pagans who trust in their fierceness."

Belgrade sits on a rocky hill, with rivers on two sides. Mohammed believed that Belgrade was the gateway to Europe and had not only shut in the fortress completely on the land side, but had also sent a fleet of boats to cut off communication by river. Undaunted, Hunyadi and Carvajal collected 200 boats. They filled the boats with men, and on July 14, taking advantage of the current, bore down upon the Turkish ships. For five hours they fought, hand to hand, while St. John Capistrano stood on the shore and encouraged the warriors by holding up the crucifix which the Pope had sent. Then the Christians broke through the line. This battle was won.

Hunyadi and his men entered the fortress with supplies and food for the people. Mohammed was furious. Night and day he sent up an unceasing artillery barrage. St. John, who had not entered the city with Hunyadi, by a clever feint got past the Turkish guards, entered the city, and began to preach constancy in the fight and confidence in the victory, as he again held up the Pope's Crucifix and prayed for Divine Aid. On the evening of July 21, Mohammed sent his best troops, the Janissaries,<sup>7</sup> to assault the fortress of 40,000 Christian soldiers. The ferocity of their charge carried them within the walls of the city. Hunyadi, however, directed the defense with great resourcefulness. He ordered the defenders to throw tarred wood, sulfur-saturated blankets, sides of bacon and other flammable material into the moat, and then set it afire. Soon a wall of flames separated the Janissaries fighting in the city from their comrades outside the walls. Those caught in the moat were burned to death or seriously injured, and the Janissaries remaining inside the city were massacred by Hunyadi's troops.

The next day, while the Turks were burying their dead, something unexpected happened. Some of the Crusader units crept out from the demolished ramparts, took up positions across from the Turkish line, and began harassing enemy soldiers, yelling and shooting arrows at them. Some Turkish Calvary stationed nearby tried to disperse the harassing force, but without success. Then some more Crusaders joined those outside the wall. What began as an isolated incident quickly escalated into a full-scale battle.

St. John of Capistrano, who at first tried to order his

men back inside the walls, soon found himself surrounded by about 2,000 Crusaders. He then began leading them toward the Turkish lines, crying: "The Lord who made the beginning will take care of the finish!"

The Turks soon found themselves faced with an angry human avalanche. Taken by surprise at this strange turn of events and paralyzed by some inexplicable fear, the Turks took to flight. By now Hunyadi's army had also joined the unplanned battle and went where the fighting was the heaviest; the Turkish efforts to stop them was hopeless. Mohammed himself was badly wounded and rendered unconscious. Under the cover of darkness, the Turks hastily loaded their wounded into 140 wagons and retreated. Upon learning that his army had been routed, that most of his leaders killed and all of his equipment abandoned, Mohammed was barely prevented from committing suicide by taking poison.

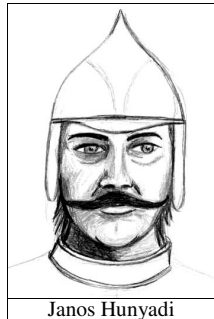
The Turkish casualties at Belgrade were unprecedented. They lost 50,000 men in the battle, and another 25,000 were slain by the Serbs during their retreat. The Christians lost less than 10,000.

The Turkish defeat was hailed as a glorious victory for Christendom, for it had stalled the Turkish invasion, which in turn saved all of Europe. Te Deums (ancient Latin prayers of thanksgiving) were sung in churches, church bells sounded, processions of thanksgiving marched through the streets and bonfires burned in celebration.

When word came to Rome, Calixtus rejoiced. He decreed that in thanksgiving for the victory the Feast of the Transfiguration was to be celebrated by the whole Church every year on August 6<sup>th</sup>. He described Hunyadi as "the most outstanding man the world had seen in 300 years." He wrote to the Bishop of Burgundy on August 14, 1456: "If this fortress [Belgrade] had been lost, the very existence of the entire Christian republic would have been in grave danger... But the Supreme Lord did not allow His religion to be covered with such darkness... The barbarians were routed by the most powerful Athlete of Christ, Prince Janos Hunyadi, and a small army of plebeians and unarmed soldiers. With joy in our hearts We were in a state of exaltation after this memorable victory. We lost our old apathy which had been caused by

the inaction of the Christian princes. And We gave thanks and honor to God and ordered that all of Christendom should pray and rejoice at this great victory."

Though the leaders of Christian Europe never heeded the Pope's cry for a march on Constantinople, the Pope's determination and the courage of the three Johns had stopped the Turks for twenty years.



Janos Hunyadi

Three short weeks after the triumph of Belgrade, on August 11, 1456, Hunyadi died, probably from the plague that had been ravaging Belgrade even before the siege. The jubilation of victory turned into sorrow when the world learned of Hunyadi's death. Even Mohammed II paid him tribute: "Although he was my enemy, I feel grief over his death, because the world has never seen such a man." On his deathbed, Hunyadi told his countrymen: "Defend, my friends, Christendom and Hungary from all enemies... Do not quarrel among yourselves. If you should waste your energies in altercations, you will seal your own fate as well as dig the grave of our country."

His countrymen did not heed his advice – Belgrade fell to the Turks in 1521.

Two and one-half months after Hunyadi's death, St. John of Capistrano died, having succumbed to the plague he contracted in the battle field.

In the spring of 1458, the Pope became ill. Now 83, His strength was gone. On August 3, a burning fever took away the last hope that He would recover. He received the Last Sacraments. On the evening of August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration, which He Himself had instituted, God released Him from His sufferings.

**The Attack on Rhodes**

Bishop Sylvius of Siena, who had preached the crusade together with St. John of Capistrano, was now Pope Pius II. He called for a crusade, even declaring that He Himself would conduct it, and towards the end of 1463 bands of crusaders began to assemble at Ancona. But when, in 1464, the Pope Himself went to Ancona to assume command of the expedition, He fell sick and died, whereupon most of the crusaders, being unarmed, desti-

*Dear Father, please continue to send The Reign of Mary to:*

1) NAME: _____	3) NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____	ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____	CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
2) NAME: _____	4) NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____	ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____	CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

tute of ammunition, and threatened with starvation, returned to their own countries.

Meanwhile, the Turks continued their onslaught, and by 1478, controlled Serbia, Bosnia, Wallachia and the Crimea. They commanded the Black Sea and the northern Aegean as well as many of the European’s prime trade routes. They even established a beachhead at Otranto in Italy in 1480.

The Muslims next turned their attention to Rhodes. In June 1480 the mightiest power in the world attacked the small band of Knights of St. John who were holding the island. The Grand Master, Pierre D’Aubusson, estimated that 3,500 cannon balls were launched against the walls in a space of 38 days. The Turks sent a message that the Knights might remain on Rhodes if they would become the vassals of the sultan. D’Aubusson wrote back a furious reply: Never would the Knights swear fealty to a Muslim. “We worship Christ with complete and utter conviction, and for Him we shall fight and meet death before we ally ourselves with Mohammed as your promises suggest.” The Turks resumed their bombardment.

Finally the Turks launched an all-out assault. D’Aubusson, in spite of four wounds which turned his armor red with blood, rallied the Knights. They fought back, the Turks panicked, and the battle was won for the Christians. The red flag with its white cross of St. John still flew over the battered city.

**Islam Marches On**

Sultan Salim I (“the Grim”) reigned from 1512 to 1520. Although he only ruled for eight years, he added more territory to the Islamic Empire than any other Sultan.

Sultan Suleiman I (“the Magnificent”), who ruled from 1520 to 1586, dispatched a force of 140,000 men, which landed on Rhodes in 1522. The fortress of Rhodes held out for nearly 5 months; the island, however, proved untenable. Starved and betrayed, the Grand Master of the Knights of St. John surrendered. Suleiman, however, was so impressed with the courage of the knights that he provided them with ships and gave them safe passage off the island.

Under Sultan Suleiman I, the Ottoman Empire reached its zenith of power and glory. During his reign, the

Ottoman Empire extended northward to include Greece, modern Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and the Balkans. The empire controlled the Mediterranean coast from Egypt to Morocco; the Sudan and all of Middle East, including Arabia; the territories of Syria, Persia, Afghanistan and India. Twice they nearly conquered Vienna.

The Muslims did suffer one defeat however; they were driven out of Spain in 1492, after nearly 800 years of occupation, thanks to the courageous efforts and sacrifices of Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand of Spain.

<sup>1</sup> The missions to the Mongols were inaugurated by Pope Innocent IV in 1245, who sent John Carpini, one of the most faithful sons of St. Francis of Assisi, to the Mongol Emperor in Central Asia. Other missionaries followed. While the Mongol princes, as a rule, failed to be converted, they placed no obstacles in the way of the missionaries. Unfortunately, the seed sown by these heroic missionaries in China was destroyed in 1368, when the Ming dynasty, whose founder was an ex-Buddhist priest, took control over China.

<sup>2</sup> Ladislaus III was the uncle of St. Casimir of Poland.

<sup>3</sup> A patriarch is a bishop who holds the highest rank, after the pope, in the hierarchy of jurisdiction.

<sup>4</sup> Schism is a refusal to submit to the authority of the Church. The Byzantine Empire was the eastern half of the Roman Empire after its split in 395.

<sup>5</sup> Belgrade is now part of present day Serbia.

<sup>6</sup> Hunyadi grew up a deeply religious man. His comrades at court frequently saw him slip out of bed late at night to spend hours on his knees in devout prayer in the royal chapel. He was also a natural soldier.

<sup>7</sup> The Janissaries were captured Christian youth who had been seized during the invasions of various countries, converted to Islam, & given the finest military training, thereby rendering them the *elite* of Turkish infantry. They were fierce fighters and greatly feared in Europe.

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