

# *Living City* *over the* **DEAD**

From the forum of Pompeii, where Roman power flourished, the world's greatest Shrine of the Rosary is seen lifting its spire over and beyond the ruins.

By JOHN M. HAFERT

**It's one of those things you "have to see to believe" . . . a dead city (killed in 24 hours) alongside a new city which came to life out of Rosary miracles.**

You see it . . . and you believe it.

But since many of our readers can't go to Pompeii, we asked Archbishop Arelio Signora . . . Pontifical Delegate Prelate of the Sanctuary of Pompeii . . . to send us the pictures that accompany this article from a previous SOUL, which we are afraid too many of our readers may have forgotten.

Cleveland, Detroit, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, New York, Miami, Saint Louis, Columbus, Albany, Buffalo, Boston, Portland, Atlanta, Paris, London and Rome . . . *these* living cities are the Pompeiis of today. *Our Vesuvius is the atomic bomb.*

Let's take a good, hard look at the lesson God teaches us in Pompeii . . . where THE Rosary Shrine of the world was arbitrarily raised up by God, through miracles, on the ashes of a city that had a warning, but turned it down.

Pompeii received a warning 25 years before its destruction . . . something like the warnings that rumble from the deserts of New Mexico

Although the people of Pompeii were alarmed by that first eruption of Vesuvius and by the lethal cloud of dust which followed, it was not too severe. They soon forgot, and grew careless again of their fire-mountain neighbor.

Then on a beautiful August day, just 46 years after Our Lord was crucified, Mount Soma—the twin of Vesuvius—violently erupted, spewing lava down its gigantic sides into the sea. A great cloud of poisonous gas and ashes descended upon Pompeii. Many people fled from the city, leaving all behind them. They were the fortunate ones. They reached the galleys and survived. But those who turned back to take their possessions, or who lingered in the city, were overcome. Pompeii was completely annihilated by layer upon layer of ashes—until it was no longer to be seen.

Thus in one day a "modern" city, with a population of 25,000 people, in all its luxury and richness was wiped out.

But it was not wiped out like some of the beautiful cities of Greece—after which Pompeii had



been modeled. Corinth, for instance, in which at that very time Saint Paul was preaching and where his words fell on deaf ears—today is only a bare scattering of stone ruins, hardly discernible in an empty plain.

### Preserved

Pompeii was *preserved* beneath those ashes, as though left to be a warning to our century when we would discover the buried city, and slowly and painstakingly unearth it.

The "discovery" of Pompeii is still going on. Little by little, we see building after building and street after street uncovered. People and animals are found in the exact positions in which they died—and although their bodies rotted in the hardened ash, casts are made inside the ash giving an exact reproduction of them as they were at the moment of death.

Today you can walk through this city, although the roofs of most of the buildings are destroyed in the unearthing process, and you can marvel at the people who lived there.

*And how many cities of the world today might not deserve the same fate? Looming over us, instead of Vesuvius and Soma, are the atomic and hydrogen bombs . . . and how ready are we?*

Pompeii was a peak in human culture, if you can define "culture" in the light of civic progress, physical comfort, and intellectual achievements of art, music, and literature.

There is probably no city in the modern world today more modern in any of these respects than was Pompeii. Indeed, considering the 2,000 years that have elapsed, and how much farther advanced we

should be after this time, Pompeii was—in this relative sense—far superior to any modern city.

Easily reached from Rome in the luxurious galleys which were the yachts of the first century, Pompeii was comparatively remote by chariot or horseback along the sea from Rome . . . yet not too remote.

It nestled back from the sea at the feet of Mount Vesuvius and Mount Soma. With radiant heat, swimming pools, running water, shops floored with fine mosaics done by Grecian slaves, Pompeii displayed luxuries from every corner of the Roman Empire.

In the center of the city, the great Forum . . . with its buildings of justice and its great market . . . was as fashionable as St. Mark's Square in Venice today, or Fifth Avenue in New York.

There was one thing lacking.

The people of Pompeii, in their whirl of Roman success, forgot God.

Pleasure ruled Pompeii, although moderated by the highly advanced Roman law which patterned the international and national laws of the world of today.

That is where the resemblance between Pompeii and many modern cities is greatest.

To complete the significance of buried Pompeii as a living reminder to our modern world is the *Sanctuary of Our Lady of Pompeii*, one of the greatest testimonies in the world to the miraculous power of Our Lady of the Rosary.

### The Sanctuary

When Pompeii was first being unearthed and the newspapers of the world were speaking of the extraordinary discovery of this buried city, an Italian peasant named Bartolo Longo went to Pompeii where his wife's family had some property. He found the property in very poor condition and began to work there. But there was no Catholic Church, no place to go to the Sacraments.

So Bartolo wanted to build a little

shrine to Our Lady, and he asked permission of the Bishop.

The Bishop told him not to work on just a shrine, but to try to have a church built there.

Bartolo got the people together and they built a small church in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary for which Bartolo promised a picture of the Madonna to be placed over the altar.

The only picture he had was a print, and when he learned that a common print could not be used over a main altar, he went to Naples, determined that his people should not be disappointed and that the shrine should be complete with a picture of Our Lady of the Rosary. The cheapest picture he could find cost 400 Liras, more than he could possibly afford. But an old friend offered him an oil painting, picked up from a junk shop for 3 Liras, and in Bartolo's own words: "Not only was it worm-eaten, but the Madonna's face was coarse and rough—a piece of canvas was missing above her head—St. Dominic looked like a street idiot. However, I had promised a picture for that evening, so I had to take it."

### The Picture

The picture was delivered by a trucker who, not knowing what it was, brought it out to Pompeii on a load of manure. But the people had their picture and it is the same picture now to be seen in the great Basilica built on that spot; it is world-famous: "Our Lady of the Rosary of Pompeii".

Our Lady is the central figure; on her right kneels St. Dominic to whom the Child Jesus is giving a Rosary; on her left St. Catherine of Sienna receives another Rosary.

It was in November of 1875 that this picture came to Pompeii. A few years later it was skillfully retouched by a Neopolitan artist who said that it was hopeless to try to improve it. But through this poor painting Our Lady began immediately to heal the sick and to grant favors. A child was cured of epilepsy, and a young woman saved from death. A priest dying of gangrene recovered completely. These and other cures were judged by the Diocese to be miraculous; that is, they were immediate, they were cases beyond medical help, and they were also confirmed by doctors. The priest who had been cured saying Mass at Pompeii on the Feast of the Holy Rosary, in 1876, preached on the miracle that saved his life and started the fame of the Sanctuary and an increased devotion to the Rosary throughout Italy.

The Bishop of the Diocese then requested that a Basilica be built

here, on the land belonging to Bartolo Longo which the latter dedicated to this purpose.

The Basilica is loved and known throughout Italy and is a favorite place of pilgrimage. It belongs now to the Vatican, because Bartolo gave all his rights in the valley to St. Pius X. In 1934, at the command of Pope Pius XI, a new Basilica was built, with the world-famous picture enshrined over the great altar.

News of the wonders performed at Pompeii are published regularly in a magazine which goes from the Sanctuary to the four corners of the world. For years we have been receiving it at the offices of SOUL Magazine, at Ave Maria Institute. And it was through learning of this great shrine in the constant news coming to us in this excellent magazine that we became first interested in beginning our pilgrimage in Europe at this shrine of Our Lady.

### The Lesson

However—there is the deeper reason of the lesson which Our Lady of the Rosary preaches at Pompeii . . . *The lesson of Fatima.*

Our Lady has told us at Fatima, when she required of us the meditative recitation of the Rosary, that *if her requests are not heard—“Several entire nations will be annihilated”.*

To know what can happen, we need only look at the ruins of Pompeii, and next to it the constant proof of Our Lady's power through the Rosary.

The one is dead, the other alive. The one is mute testimony to the wages of sin, and the other is a vital testimony to the power of the Rosary.

Proud cities of the world! Remember Pompeii!!

Rulers and men of wealth, merchants and builders, walk through the streets of Pompeii now.

This city disappeared in a day! People in shops, in restaurants, in squares, in theatres, in secret chambers . . . were alive one hour and buried alive the next.

### 25 Year Warning

What could they do to save themselves? They had had a warning 25 years in advance!

Now . . . look at the new Pompeii. See the power of Our Lady in this world-famous Shrine of the Rosary.

There is something we can do . . . despite the cloud of atomic war which hovers over us.

In 1917, when we were warned, God . . . through Our Lady of Fatima . . . told us: "Mend your lives!" . . . "Say the Rosary".

**T**he Blue Army is a crusade of millions of men, women, and children all over the world who are doing what the Blessed Mother asked at Fatima: offering prayer and sacrifice daily. They offer these prayers and sacrifices because Our Lady promised: "If my requests are heard, Russia will be converted and there will be peace."

### Three Conditions

- 1 To say the Rosary daily
- 2 To wear the Scapular
- 3 To offer reparation through the sacrifices demanded by your daily duty

### Four Recommendations

- 1 Make the First Saturdays
- 2 Send signed Pledge to Headquarters
- 3 Get others to join
- 4 Wear something blue  
*preferably the Blue Army pin.*

### Six Benefits

- 1 You know you are fulfilling Our Lady's conditions for the conversion of Russia
- 2 You obtain numerous indulgences through the Rosary and the Scapular
- 3 You become eligible for the Sabbatine Privilege
- 4 Your name is flown to Fatima and buried at the site of the apparitions
- 5 You are remembered in special Masses at the spot of the apparitions
- 6 You share in the prayers of the millions of other Blue Army members

Our great enemy is not Communism, it is the spirit of atheism, without which Communism would disappear. Atheism is an ideology and can only be conquered by a superior ideology. Ideas can't be shot with a gun.

**YOUR BLUE ARMY PLEDGE** is your promise to fulfill Our Lady's conditions for peace. Prayer and penance are weapons mightier than armies, more effective than diplomacy. Soldiers and statesmen are necessary but their success—or lack of it—depends ultimately upon how many of us heed **THE PEACE PLAN FROM HEAVEN.**

**Blue Army  
Washington, N. J.**