



"Two kilometres south of Deruta, in the locality of Casalina, amidst the once quite impervious woods that evoking fear and were a hiding place for robbers, lies the small sanctuary of the Madonna dei Bagni. To reach the sanctuary, we must take a detour from the main road, along the highway SS. 3 bis (Località Madonna dei Bagni, Fraz. Casalina, Deruta).

The centrally planned sanctuary was erected in 1687, at the site in which, in 1657, a certain Cristoforo di Filippo, from Casalina, is said to have picked up and attached between two branches of an oak tree, the image of the Madonna with Child on the bottom of a ceramic cup he found on the ground while strolling. Cristoforo's wife was very ill and, some time later, passing before the image, he prayed to the Virgin Mary, pleading with her to heal his wife. The man returned home to find his wife healed. To thank Mary for having listened to his prayers, he placed a votive plaque on the oak (the remains of which are still visible above the altar).

This is how the devotion to the Madonna dei Bagni began and is still deeply felt by the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, who make an annual procession to the Sanctuary, on the day celebrating the event. Inside the church, there is a large collection of polychrome votive tiles, counting more than 600, covering almost all the walls. On each one, the miraculous event is depicted, as well as the letters: P.G.R. (*Per Grazia Ricevuta* – for grace received) or V.F.G.A. (*Voto Fatto Grazia Avuta* – vote made grace received).

These tiles, which depict the miracle in a naive artistic style, arouse great interest in visitors to the sanctuary. This is because, besides being a testament the tradition of ceramics in the area,

they are also evidence of the unique features relative to religious beliefs, habits, traditions, aspects of life and social changes that have occurred over time, becoming key documents in the history of popular customs and traditions. In 1980, there was a theft and several tiles were stole. These were largely recovered, but as a result, the Sanctuary has reduced visiting hours: for free admission, inquiries should be made in advance to the Tourist Office in Deruta, tel. 075-973455.

Text taken from the "Abitare il territorio" (Discovering the territory) guide. The full text can be viewed and downloaded from these pages.