

La Voce di Rosa Mistica

The Voice of Rosa Mystica – Mother of the Universal Church – Fontanelle di Montichiari (BS)

August 2026 – 36th year – No. 2

The fruitful seed of Rosa Mystica

On Saturday, July 11—the eve of the 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time and amidst the celebrations of the 4th Rosa Mystica Festival (July 9–13, 2026)—the Vicar General of our Diocese, Msgr. Angelo Gelmini, presided over the solemn 5:00 PM Eucharist. We have decided to share his enlightening homily with all our readers; it offers valuable insight into the richness of the Marian title "Mary, Mother of the Church"—viewed through the lens of the Sunday Gospel (the Parable of the Sower)—as well as the true meaning of the Rosa Mystica devotion that our diocesan shrine seeks to offer to all pilgrims.



"Jesus tells of a sower who goes out to sow and, almost stubbornly, scatters the seed everywhere: on the road, among the rocks, among the brambles, on the good soil. He does not seem to care much about where the seed falls. If you think about it, this is not the behavior of an expert farmer. That is God's way. God loves it like this. He does not measure the gift of his grace. He does not wait for the soil to be perfect. He continues to sow even where we might think it is no longer worthwhile. Because God is never tired of humankind. He never resigns himself to their poverty. He continues to believe that every heart can become good soil. Perhaps this is the primary reason why so many come to Fontanelle. They do not come because they think they are already a good place. They come because they hope the Lord will make their lives fruitful again. Those who come here bring a story. Some carry a wound, some a burdensome sin, some a family to care for, some a distant child, some an illness, some simply the desire to find peace. Each person arrives with his or her own unique terrain. And the Lord continues to sow. It is beautiful because, precisely in this place, our gaze meets Mary.

The Church Fathers loved to say that Mary was the blessed field in which God planted the seed of his Word. Saint Ambrose contemplates her heart as a soil that did not resist God, but offered him all the space he needed for his promise to flourish. Mary is not great because she did extraordinary things. Mary is great because she let God take his course. She guarded the Word. She meditated on it. She let it grow. She delivered it to the world. Perhaps this is precisely the first grace we ask for today. Not so much that the Lord immediately change the circumstances of our lives, but that he make our hearts more like Mary's heart. A less hard earth. Less cluttered. Freer. More available.

This is why we invoke her here as Mother of the Church. A mother does not generate just once. She continues to nurture life. She continues to educate. She continues to protect. Thus, Mary continues to form the hearts of her disciples so that the Church too may become a good ground. The Church's recent discernment on the Sanctuary of Fontanelle reminds us of this. The Church is not attracted, first and foremost, by what appears extraordinary. She looks to the fruits that the Spirit inspires. Where conversion grows, where confession flourishes, where the Eucharist is rediscovered, where charity increases, where people learn to love one another more, there Mary is truly exercising her motherhood.

Then it comes naturally to connect all this to a beautiful image that Pope Leo XIV proposes in the Magnifica Humanitas. The Pope looks at the reconstruction of Jerusalem after the exile. He does not insist primarily on the wall, no, he looks at the people. Those walls tell the story of a community that returns to live together, that rediscovers its identity, that begins to pray, to hope, to live as God's people, each contributing to the common building. Even before stones, God rebuilds hearts. Even before the city, he rebuilds a people. It strikes me that the Pope then evokes the Jerusalem of the Apocalypse. A beautiful city, certainly protected by solid walls, but with its gates always open. It is a city that exists not to defend itself, but to welcome. A city where everyone can enter because everyone is welcome.

This is the Church: not a fortress, but a home. A home possessing a steadfast faith precisely because, founded on the rock of Christ, it knows how to open its doors. Perhaps this image also helps us better understand the times this Sanctuary is experiencing. It is natural to wish this place could continue to grow, welcoming pilgrims, offering worthy spaces for the liturgy, and fostering prayer. All of this is beautiful and important. In this desire, today the Word reminds us that an even greater work exists. The Lord continues to build a people. He continues to build a Church made of living stones: every time a person leaves this Shrine more reconciled with God, every time a family finds unity, every time someone begins to pray again, every time a vocation is born, every time a poor person finds welcome, every time a sinner discovers mercy, there the Church grows. There Mary continues her work as Mother.

Going back to the image of the sower, we can say that the seed, when it falls into the soil, is simple, makes no noise, and does not draw attention. It works in silence.

Mary, too, lived this way. Her greatness was entirely hidden. Like the seed. Each of us, who are the Church of the Lord, is called today to guard this silent fruitfulness. A Church that tirelessly sows, that welcomes without excluding, that generates without holding back; that, like Mary, leaves room for God.

Then yes, we too will become that "magnificent humanity" of which the Holy Father speaks: men and women in whom the Word has found a home and who, precisely for this reason, know how to make the world a little more like the New Jerusalem, the city in which God finally dwells with mankind."

Mgr. Angelo Gelmini
General Vicar

From the Fountain of Saint George to the Fountain of Mercy

A thread unites the Holy Knight and Maria Rosa Mystica.

A plaque still standing at the site today, installed in 1936 to mark the centenary of the spring's discovery, bears witness to this. The inscription reads: "This spring, discovered in 1836, was restored by the municipal administration to its original form and was named "Fonte San Giorgio". Montichiari 1-8-1936." This precious testimony demonstrates how, since the 19th century, that fresh spring had been immediately associated with the great knight.

A coincidence? Or a sign that links two apparently distant figures, the warrior saint and the Mother of the Church?

To understand this connection, we must begin with Saint George. A 4th-century martyr and officer in the Roman army, he preferred torture and death to denying Christ during Diocletian's persecutions. His fame, however, is linked above all to the famous legend of the dragon: George saves a princess destined for sacrifice and slays the monster that terrorized the city. Beyond the medieval tale, the meaning is crystal clear: the dragon represents evil, sin, the dark powers defeated by faith.

Less well known, however, is the strong connection between Saint George and water. In numerous Mediterranean traditions, the saint is associated with springs, fountains, and wells. Many legends tell of him making water spring from the earth to quench the thirst of the faithful or end drought. In the East, his cult is also linked to protection from disease and snakes, while water has always been a symbol of healing, purification, and new life. For this reason, associating a spring with our knight was not at all unusual. It is no coincidence that even a mineral water brand is dedicated to him. The water that flows from the earth becomes an image of grace that conquers evil, just like the saint who defeated the dragon.



*The fountain represents life
triumphing over the desert,
purity prevailing over
corruption, mercy defeating sin.*

And it is here that the connection with Rosa Mystica becomes plausible. When Our Lady chose Fontanelle as the privileged place of her presence, she did not indicate any spring, but a spring that already bore the name of the knight victorious over evil. In Rosa Mystica's apparitions and messages, invitations to conversion, penance, prayer, and reparation for the sins of the world continually recur.

St. George has powerfully symbolized the same spiritual battle for centuries. The saint fights the dragon; Mary leads her children to conquer sin through grace.

A second inscription, placed near the spring, commemorates that moment: "Here on April 17, 1966, Our Lady of the Rosa Mystica deigned to place her feet and, bending down, touched the water of the spring with her hands."

It is not difficult to grasp the symbolic power of this historical sequence. First, the spring is dedicated to Saint George, the knight who defeats the dragon and frees humanity from evil; then the Virgin bends over the water itself, blesses it, and presents it as a source of mercy and grace. It is as if the victory over evil represented by the saint finds its fulfillment in the offering of divine mercy announced by Mary. Struggle gives way to healing; combat leads to mercy; victory opens the way to spiritual rebirth. Thus, the ancient Fountain of Saint George also becomes the Fountain of Mercy: not a replacement, but almost a spiritual continuity. The warrior saint and the Mother of the Church seem to point the same way.

The very history of Montichiari seems to revolve around the figure of the Holy Knight. So much so that he is almost as dear to the town as Pancrazio, its patron saint. South of the town, in fact, stands the Hill of San Giorgio, where the Lombards, particularly devoted to the martyr, founded a monastery in the 8th century. Even today, the remains of the ancient church and its crypt are visible on the top of the hill. Unfortunately, it was incorporated into other, more recently constructed buildings, making it difficult to clearly identify.

It is on the northern slopes of this hill that we find the ancient Fonte and Sanctuary of Rosa Mystica, in the wide valley that leads to the village and the more important hill of San Pancrazio, with its perfectly preserved historic parish church. Important archaeological remains have also emerged in these fields, such as numerous burials attributable to a Lombard necropolis located at the foot of the patron saint's hill.

However, the coincidences do not end there. "Montegiario" was founded on April 13, 1167, but the event was officially celebrated on April 23, the liturgical feast of Saint George. It is as if the city's destiny had been placed under his protection from the very beginning. Even one of the most dramatic local events bears his name. On October 8, 1420, the famous Battle of San Giorgio was fought on this very small patch of countryside, now cultivated, connecting the hills of San Giorgio and San Pancrazio.



San Giorgio Alto of Montichiari

It was a huge battle for the time, with over six thousand deaths, a staggering number considering the entire town had a population of just three thousand. On one side, the Malatesta troops led by Ludovico Migliorati, aiding Pandolfo III Malatesta, lord of Brescia; on the other, the Visconti family led by the famous Francesco Bussone, Count of Carmagnola. That battle marked a turning point in Brescia's history. The era of the Malatestas ended and the way was paved for the events that would bring the area into the orbit of the Most Serene Republic of Venice, on the threshold of the Renaissance.

Once again, the name of Saint George appears alongside a moment of struggle and turning point. It is no coincidence, then, that the spring dedicated to him was chosen by Maria Rosa Mystica. The Fountain of Saint George and the Fountain of Mercy are not two separate entities, but two chapters of the same story. A story that spans the centuries, from the Lombard monastery to the apparitions of Rosa Mystica, and which continues to draw pilgrims from all over the world to that water which, even before being touched by the hands of the Madonna, already bore the name of the Saint whom Christian tradition has always considered the conqueror of evil and the guardian of hope.

Saint George recalls the fight against evil; Our Lady offers the mercy that heals the wounds left by that struggle. The Saint represents the courage of faith; Mary provides the grace to live it. The Knight pierces the dragon; the Mother, who will crush the head of the infernal serpent, leads her children to spiritual victory.

Riccardo Caniato

LA VOCE DI ROSA MISTICA

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TO BE ENTERED IN THE CALENDAR

Domenica 20 settembre

4° Edizione 2026

PELLEGRINAGGIO DIOCESANO
Maria Rosa Mystica

Pellegrinaggio diocesano a piedi dal Santuario della Madonna di Valverde di Rezzato al Santuario Diocesano Rosa Mystica - Madre della Chiesa di Montichiari.

Affidiamo tutte le nostre famiglie, i nostri sacerdoti e la nostra Diocesi alla protezione di Maria.

Il cammino sarà animato con canti, preghiere e testimonianze.

Per partecipare è NECESSARIO ISCRIVERSI ESCLUSIVAMENTE attraverso il form all'indirizzo:
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PERCORSO

ORARI

- ore 06:30 Registrazione e partenza presso Santuario Madonna di Valverde (Rezzato)
- ore 11:00 Arrivo previsto al Santuario delle Fontanelle
- ore 12:00 PRANZO AL SANTUARIO
- ore 13:00 S. Messa presieduta dal Vescovo di Brescia, S.E. Mons. Pierantonio Tremolada

NOTE TECNICHE

- Cammino complessivo: 24 km.
- Possibilità di aggregarsi nelle sotto-programmate:

- ore 09:00 - Oratorio di Cassenedolo
- ore 11:30 - Casa GRISMA di Vighizzolo
- ore 12:30 - Parcheggio Plera Montichiari

Possibilità di prenotare il pullman per il ritorno entro il 15 SETTEMBRE

Diocesan Sanctuary of Rosa Mystica - Mother of the Church
Fontanelle di Montichiari (BS) Italy

Pierina Gilli:
"the rag"
of Rosa Mystica

2nd International Conference
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www.rosamisticafontanelle.it/en

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"Va' e Ripara la mia Chiesa!"
Anno Giubilare Franceseano



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"Santuario Diocesano Rosa Mystica"

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