

My name is Ferrara Raffaele, known as 'Lello'.

. I was born in Grumo Nevano (NA) on 07/05/1966 and I come from a very large family, made up of 11 brothers; I am the ninth

I was born at 7 months old; when I was 4 years old I couldn't speak, or rather I couldn't pronounce words clearly, I couldn't compose sentences and I couldn't walk, thus giving obvious management problems to those who looked after me

My parents worked in Frosinone and came home every 15 days or so, depending on what was possible and what was needed, so my older sister was in charge of looking after and managing the family Her duties also included taking me to school, but since I didn't really want to go, I always found a way to play truant, thus creating serious clashes with my parents due to my obstinacy of not attending school.

Because of my various and well-deserved school failures, my parents, in desperation, decided to take me to Ururi, in the province of Campobasso, to my uncle, my father's brother, so that I could change my life, be looked after by new people and attend new circles.

But this too was a failure, because it did not produce the desired results; so I went back to Naples and decided to go to work.

As you can understand, my adolescence was quite turbulenta come si può capire, la mia adolescenza fu abbastanza turbolenta.

I was nearly 19 years old and engaged, like many of my peers.

I was a Catholic but not a practising Catholic, unlike my aunt, who was very devout and practising and often organised pilgrimages to "**Oliveto Citra**", a small mountain village in the province of Salerno, where there were the remains of an abandoned castle, nearby it apparitions of the Virgin Mary took place.

One day, on my way to see my girlfriend, I met my aunt and stopped to talk to her. Between one word and another, she invited me to one of her pilgrimages to Oliveto Citra.

With great amazement at the invitation, I clearly refused, but she was insistent Then intrigued by this insistence, I promised her that one day I would go, but on the condition that I would neither enter the Church nor pray, also because I did not know any prayers, not even the "Hail Mary". So my aunt reassured me by telling me that if I didn't want to, I didn't have to go into the Church and that I could stay in front of the gate or just wander around the village.

It was the **8th December 1985**. On that day, my aunt had organized the pilgrimage to Oliveto Citra and I had to go, as I had promised. I hoped that my girlfriend would come with me, but she didn't want to know, so I had to go alone, to make my aunt happy.

During the trip, the believers prayed the Holy Rosary inside the bus: and I felt uncomfortable and I was regretted my decision.

When we arrived at the site, there were many people praying and lined up on a flight of

steps to get to an old gate that was the entrance to a castle.

I, too, was seized with curiosity and got in line: I wanted to see what there was in front of or behind this gate.

But once I was there, I saw nothing in particular, so I left.

As I was descending the staircase, which ended in the little square in front of the castle, I looked up at the gate and, staring at it, I felt my heart thudding inside me, beating fast, fast. Amazed by this event, I asked myself what was happening to me, I thought maybe it was the atmosphere of that place, but, in short, I could not give myself an explanation.

Suddenly, as I was looking at the gate, I saw a large white light with the image of a cross inside.

Then this image opened up and I caught a glimpse of the silhouette of a woman with her hands outstretched, in a sign of embrace, then she joined together and with her face looking to the right and left.

I was amazed; I did not realise what was happening to me

I immediately ran away in tears from the place where I was standing. I wanted to stay far from the crowd. I was crying and didn't want to talk to anyone, but I felt a great peace within me.

At a certain point, I saw my worried aunt coming and asking me what had happened to me, but I didn't want to tell her what had happened, because I was afraid she would tell people. But she calmed me down, told me not to worry and that it would remain a secret between us and I told her everything that had happened to me.

I spent the rest of the evening in silence and then we finally went home.

From that moment on, however, the desire to return to that place was great within me

After a few days, I saw my aunt again and I asked her when she would organise another pilgrimage to Oliveto Citra. She replied that another group would be left the following Monday; so I immediately took advantage of this and joined them.

I left for my second pilgrimage and went to the gate, but this time I didn't see anything special. Inside me there was always a great peace and when I left Oliveto Citra, I promised myself that I would return.

It was **30 January 1986** when I returned to the castle for the third time. There were so many people, as always I lined up to get to the gate and, as I went up the stairs, I tried to pray "Hail Mary, Holy Mary" because I could not recite it in full.

While I was praying and climbing, suddenly, of everything around me, I saw nothing.

There was only a great light, which grew stronger and stronger and opened up; in this light I saw a beautiful woman. I saw her clearly: she was clothed with a heavenly mantle, a golden belt and she was standing on a cloud, with a child in her arms. She said to me:

"Don't be afraid, I'm the Mother of Heaven! Love yourself, love yourself and don't be afraid, My son! Begin to go to Mass. Pray, pray!"

Then, She bent over my forehead, kissing it, and I fainted

There, in the small square next to the castle, was the headquarters of the “Queen of the Castle” committee, where I was transported for assistance.

When I came to, I was surrounded by the people who had rescued me, who asked me what had happened to me, but I did nothing but ask where the Lady who had kissed my forehead were.

They did not understand what I was referring to, but they could smell a great perfume coming from my forehead, which invaded the whole room.

Among the rescuers and the people who were there to assist me, there was also Father Mario Baraglini and his secretary Anna Ghibellini, who were there in Oliveto Citra as pilgrims.