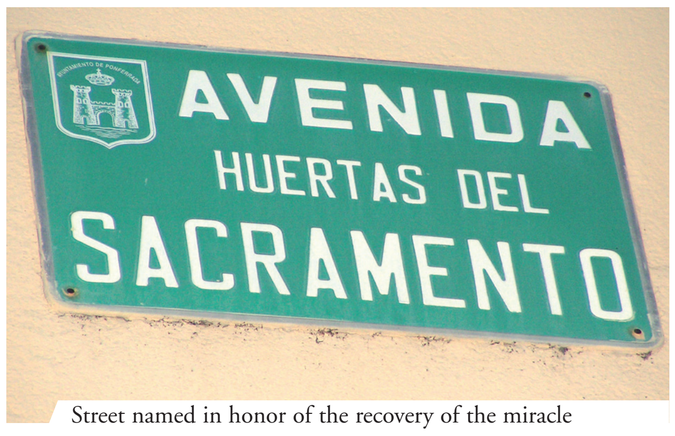
MIRACLES-Spain pannels 11/02/08 15:46 Page 17

Eucharistic Miracle of PONFERRADA

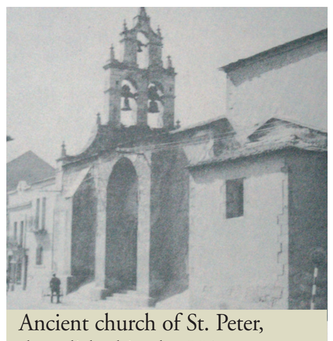
SPAIN, 1533

In the miracle of Ponferrada, Juan De Benavente decided to steal the tabernacle containing a precious silver ciborium with numerous consecrated Hosts inside from his very own parish. With only the passing of time and miraculous circumstances the recovery of the stolen Hosts, which remained perfectly intact, was made possible.

Painting that depicts the miracle, currently housed in the new church of St. Peter



Street named in honor of the recovery of the miracle


Ancient church of St. Peter, demolished in the 20th century, where the painting of the miracle was previously housed, Ponferrada

The Virgin of the Evergreen Oak

New Church of St. Peter, Ponferrada

Exact site where the Hosts where found

Sil River, near the Arenal Field, where Juan de Benavente wanted to throw the tabernacle containing the Hosts

Church of St. Mary where the miracle took place, Ponferrada

Juan De Benavente lived in Ponferrada with his wife. It was apparent that he was very devout and religious. In fact every evening he stopped in church to pray. One day, during his prayer time, he succumbed to greed and seized the tabernacle, a simple wooden container, in which there was a precious silver ciborium containing some consecrated Hosts. He fled from the church and headed towards the Sil River in order to pitch the cheap wooden tabernacle, but when he tried to launch it into the water he could not because of its sudden immense weight. So he returned home where he hid everything and said nothing to his wife. During the night continuous flashes of light came from the tabernacle, arousing the suspicion of his wife. So Juan decided to go out and dispose of his sacrilegious stolen goods. He reached a place the townspeople called the Arenal Field and threw the tabernacle and consecrated Hosts into the middle of the blackberry patch. The discovery of the crime brought dismay among all of the population and Juan became increasingly nervous and anxious, also because he did not know how to sell the silver ciborium without getting caught.

Near the Arenal Field, the owner of the land, Diego Nuñez de Losada, set up a target practice for entertainment during the feast days. During the time frame in which the sacred Hosts were still in the blackberry patch, eyewitnesses reported seeing flashes of light at night and strange doves hovering during the day. The crossbowmen tried in vain to hit the doves. The miller Nogaledo decided then to capture the doves with his own hands and ventured into the blackberry patch, discovering the tabernacle and the sacred Hosts from where the intense flashes of light originated. Disturbed, he went straight towards the church where the bells were ringing in the distance. The return of the sacred Hosts was organized vith a solemn procession. Juan was overcome with remorse and decided to admit his guilt. In the place where the miraculous Hosts were recovered a chapel was immediately constructed. In 1570 the parish priest planned the expansion of the building and instituted a solemn annual procession on the eighth day of the Feast of Corpus Christi in memory of the miracle.

© 2006, Istituto San Clemente I Papa e Martire / Real Presence Eucharistic Education and Adoration Association