

Filippo Civale

MY AVVOCATE



*It is better to know where to go
and not know how,
than to know how to go
and not know where.*

PRESENTATION

"Have you turned off your mobile phone? If not, it will suck all your energy and you won't be able to climb all the way to the top.

This was Philip's instruction to me when, years ago, he kindly agreed to take me with him to 'his' Avvocata. Although I obeyed his request without a word, I could not help smiling inside, with a hint of excessive condescension.

At the time, his peremptory request appeared to me to be nothing more than a ritual, or rather a whim with no scientific basis.

Some time later I had to make amends as I read this passage which talked about the latest scientific research on the harm of using mobile phones:

"... increased brain electricity has also been observed during mobile phone use: the electroencephalogram records peaks and troughs lasting up to 24 hours after the phone is switched off".

I thus had yet another confirmation that culture and even more so wisdom have nothing to do with erudition.

In the years following that first ascent, I spent many hours together with Filippo walking along the Maiori seafront but exchanging very few words. This short pamphlet evens out Philip's long, noble silence interrupted only by the chirping of birds and the sound of our footsteps and my laboured breathing.

I am almost certain that Philip has not read 'The Art of Silence', written by Abbot Dinouart back in 1771, but, as with the use of mobile phones, he is wary of idle chatter as well, as someone who has an ancient innate wisdom that suggests he should save his breath and walk, walk, walk

Stefano Della Pietra


MY RISE



Introduction *by Gerardo Russomando*

I have known Filippo Civaie for about twenty years.

And I am also one of the many who, guided by him, have climbed the Sanctuary of Avvocata. But it is impossible not to see him every day when, at any time of day, he strolls, almost always alone, along the Maiori seafront. Then it also happens that he goes for a moment, always on his own two feet, to Positano and returns the same day, perhaps under the scorching August sun.

Last year, he walked a total of 8,700 kilometres, practically averaging over 23 kilometres per day.

On the 16th of September this year he turned 85 years old.

He could easily be my father, there is a 24-year difference between us.

After all, when he was born (the second of six children) his mother was 20 and his father 24. And at that time it was quite normal. But by dint of walking along the promenade together, we became friends. The three of us walking together with his friend Saverio after Sunday evening Mass at St Francis has become a tradition. And as we get to know him better and better, it is inevitable that we wonder where all this strength and energy comes from. So when, chatting with our friend Stefano Della Pietra, he asked me to give him a hand in writing this little book, I was delighted.

The story of his life is a piece of Rossellini's and Pasolini's Italy. But he is not folklore and, even less, archaeology.

Cardinal Ratzinger was once asked how many ways there are to get to God.

And he answered: "As many as there are men".

Filippo here tells, in a crystal clear way, his way. Perhaps he is simply a modern ascetic.

Even today, at least once a week, he leaves, almost always alone, from Maiori and walks for more than four hours to climb the Sanctuary of Avvocata, more than 800 metres above sea level.

He goes because he cannot not go. Our Lady is, in a certain sense, everything in his life. This inseparable bond is recounted and understood very well in these pages.

I would just add one more thing.

Reflecting on all of Philip's ascents to Avvocata, something that Monsignor Luigi Giussani often said came to mind.

In his first approach to Brazil, he met a PIME missionary, Father Angelo Biraghi, on the Amazon. Giussani accompanied him and saw him put on his galoshes up to his waist and enter the mud, and walk away, to arrive after eight hours at a seringueiro who was pulling rubber out of trees in the forest.

Giussani said: "I must have stood there for at least half an hour without moving, thinking: "But look what Christianity is! This man who risks his skin for one (one!), to go and see someone whom he had never met before and whom he might never see again in life, to bring him a word and to mark a gesture of friendship!"".

Think about it: Philip has been doing all this hard work all his life just to go and see the Madonna who appeared on that mountain in a dream to a shepherd in November 1485.

Happy reading.

FIRST PART

**My life and
devotion to the Avvocata**

My story

I am Filippo Civale, born on the 16th of September 1936 in the hamlet of Vecite di Maiori. Second of six children.

My father was called Gaetano and my mother Maria Sammarco.



I am very devoted to the Madonna dell'Avvocata which is located on Mount Falesio, visible from any corner of Maiori.

I'll tell you why: my mother used to tell me that in 1936, the Fascist period, babies died of food shortages and minor illnesses such as bronchitis and so on.

The Blessed Virgin of Avvocata was the mother to whom everyone turned. It was the feast of the Virgin, in the month of May, when my mother, who was five months pregnant with me, together with my father, decided to go up the mountain to entrust me to the miraculous Madonna, telling her in dialect "Madonna nun 'o fa' muri, piensace tu!".

Today I feel obliged to thank her for protecting me and to pray to her because she still gives me, at my age, so much energy to go up to her. And I go there, not so much for myself, but for those in need... and many are the prayers that are entrusted to me and that I bring to you with great faith.

My mother no longer had the opportunity to go and thank her locally for the arrival of other children, and for the poverty that was looming, especially due to the Second World War. It was a time of hunger, when people had to make do with just 50 grams of bread a day, which the Italian state gave to each member of the family.

The rest was completed with the wild herbs we went to pick or something that our peasant friends gave us from their gardens in exchange for some help with the work. She also told me that when I was born she worked, together with one of my father's sisters, in one of the 13 small paper mills that ran from Tramonti to Maiori and were supplied with water from the Reghinna river. The owner of the paper mill allowed newborn babies to be brought into the mill for breastfeeding. Well, her sister-in-law had also been born with her sixth child, my age. But my aunt didn't have enough milk for feeding. So my mother also gave milk to my little cousin named William. All this happened until my mother suffered from organic wasting caused by the poor diet and was rushed to hospital in serious condition. She was treated well but she was told clearly not to give her milk to my little cousin anymore. Unfortunately, reluctantly, she had to do so. As a result, little Guglielmo, who had no other way of feeding himself, died of hardship. In the following years, my aunt gave birth to five more children and gave the first one the same name. After the flood of 25/26 October 1954, young Guglielmo emigrated to Australia and still lives there.

I wanted to tell these episodes of my life also to reflect on our present. How can you say that children are no longer being born because of economic difficulties? It is clear to me that today's conditions are not even remotely -comparable to those of my childhood.

My visits

My first visit to the Blessed Virgin, in order to thank her, took place on the 2nd of June 1952 (see photo, I was with a friend of mine called Di Bianco Erasmo), when I was 16, on the occasion of His feast day, the day after Pentecost.



Since then I have not left her alone during her feast, I have always been there. Now we have made a pact, I told her: "Our Lady, let me come up because I have prayers, if you don't let me come up, the prayers won't reach you. Then, keep in mind that I always bring someone eager to pray at your feet and you always welcome everyone and everyone has obtained from you what they desired. As you have noticed, last year, in the year 2020, the president of Italian journalists, Carlo Verna, had also expressed his desire to come to you, and we came".

The people of the Sanctuary

And now, I would like to tell a little story from when I was going up to pray to Our Lady. The first hermit I met was Vincenzo Buonocore who, having turned to Her during the Second World War, was miraculously saved and after the end of the war lived more at the Sanctuary than in his own home. I remember when I used to go up with him from Maiori and we slept in the hermit's house, and on the day we had to go back he would go to the feet of the Madonna and say: "Mo' me vado mamma, t arraccumann piensace tu". The second, Vincenzo Buonocore's nephew, was called Vincenzo Coppola, and he did everything he could to keep the church open for us faithful, especially on public holidays. Then came the successive Benedictines. I remember Fra Urbano, and, after him, Don Gennaro Lo Schiavo, who passed away a few months ago from Covid.

I really feel like thanking him for everything he did, together with the many volunteers from Cava dei Tirreni and Maiori: the Shrine has become a small Cathedral. He has left an immense memory, with his goodness of spirit in each of us, and with his charisma he has always warmly welcomed the many faithful who flocked from all over Campania and other regions. The grotto has never been so rich in memories and graces received. On Sunday, 17th October 2021, I took part in the Holy Mass, in the open air despite the autumnal weather, due to the large number of pilgrims, for the inauguration of the new Rector, Fr Domenico Zito (see photo).



Miraculous signs of Our Lady

I used to own an old Fiat 500 car.

I needed it when I went up Sull'Avvocata to get to Scalse.

Before I started to walk up, I would turn it around and put it in the downhill starting position. So when I picked it up, I would push it a little by hand, without starting it, and then climb aboard. Given that the descent is steep, I would also put my foot on the brake straight away.

One day, I made this movement but instead of putting my foot on the brake, I put it in the middle and the car picked up a lot of speed. So I thought I was applying the brake, but it didn't work because I was pressing on the floor and not on the brake pedal...I thought that I was lost but luckily the car went on the straight so the car slowed down and then stopped and I became aware of my stupidity.

Another event.

I had a Fiat Panda 4x4 suitable for the steep climb in case of rain or a sudden stop. My brother-in-law had a son-in-law who worked in the Italian Army and he gave me a pair of boots suitable for the mountains, knowing that I was keen on going up there often to thank the Virgin Mary. One day, I put them on and went up the mountain. On the way back, near where I parked my car, there were some peasants waiting for me to give them a lift to the centre of Maiori. But along the dangerous descent, precisely in the stretch after the first one, since there were four of us (and they can testify to that), even though we were descending slowly, being downhill, the weight increased our speed. At that point, to be on the safe side, I engaged first gear and put my foot on the brake, but the car gained further speed as the width of the boot also touched the accelerator. Immediately I pulled the handbrake, which stopped everything.

For the record, a few years ago, at the exact same place, a 4x4 truck overturned and fell into the slope: one person was injured and one died.

Four years ago, there was another miraculous sign that I saw.

A helicopter carrying mineral water, gas cylinders and other items was coming up from Cava dei Tirreni. Due to its excessive weight, it brushed against the trees and was about to approach the church. When it was only a few metres away, it

unhooked its load and regained altitude. There were dozens of people below.

Also a couple of years ago, a local shepherd was standing in the church square and I was there. He looked out to see the people below drinking, but he leaned his abdomen against the protective iron, which gave way. He fell into the void, from a height of about 8/9 metres, without injury, and walked back to the square.

SECOND PART

The ascent



The Sanctuary can be seen at the highest point on each climb.
There is still a long way to go from Scalese.



The Sanctuary is approaching.
We are already in Santa Maria but there is still some climbing to do.



*The Sanctuary is approaching.
We are already in Santa Maria but there is still some climbing to do.*



Pleasant encounters on the way up...
The mules carry the wood from the cutting of the forest down to the valley...
We are in the Acqua del castagno area.



On the way up ... a cross.



"Come to me all of you".
The climb is over.



From an old window of the Sanctuary
all the beauty of the Amalfi Coast.

It continues to climb.
The Sanctuary is behind us.



We are on the highest point of the mountain (1014 m above sea level).
And the Madonna always keeps us company.





It is the top of the mountain.

And from here, after a heavy snowfall...
the Sanctuary embraces
the entire Amalfi Coast.



My route

The ascent always requires adequate equipment.

Indispensable items are:

- Long-sleeved shirt;
- Long, slightly loose-fitting trousers (to avoid reptile bites);
- Protective netting (see photo) to avoid cobwebs and insect bites, especially in spring/summer.



An umbrella is also part of my personal equipment.

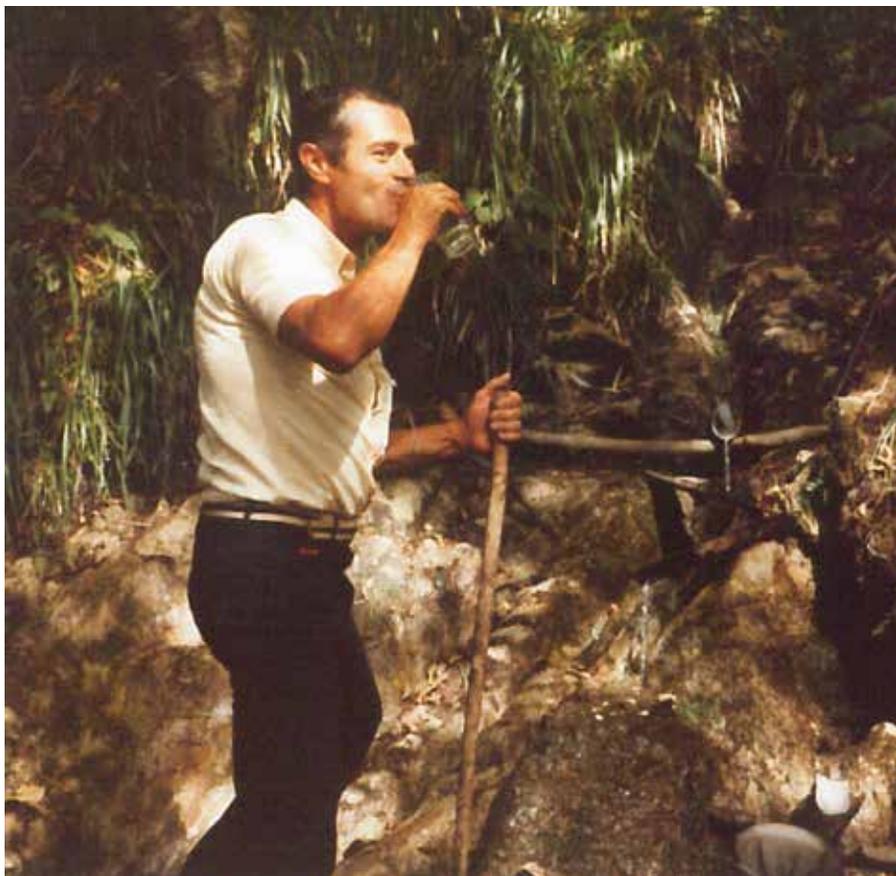
By the way... some time ago, I went to the Avvocata but forgot it in the car. Unfortunately, on the way back there was torrential rain and I got soaked. When I got home, my wife and other family members, seeing me so wet, observed the strangeness of the dry umbrella.

And they asked, "How come you are so wet and the umbrella is dry?"

My answer was:

"And, according to you, could oI pen the umbrella to get it wet?".





A few "days ago"...

A short break...with a glass of hot water the climb resumes.



It's almost spring.
The flowers are St. Joseph's... and you can also eat them.
In other times, the plate at the table was also made of these flowers.



We are at Campo di Martino. More fruit... these are strawberry trees (in dialect 'severe hairy11) and in other times, it was the 'daily bread'.



Today, however, real bread is thrown away and trampled underfoot....



Locality Santa Maria.

My climb continues but almost half of it is already done.



It's uphill again...





Location Acqua del castagno.

At last, after the forest has been cut, the entire landscape can be admired.

Also in Acqua del castagno, there is an interesting puddle with the presence of a poisonous yellow and black salamander.

The ones you see in the photos I captured to show to my grandchildren. In the meantime, about seventy tadpoles were also born in the bottle and, of course, I returned them to their natural habitat with their mother the next day.





Another short stop to admire the spectacle of stalactites and stalagmites.

In front of us is the haystack* with an effigy of the Avocata at the apex together with the visionary Gabriel.

*1 haystacks were the shepherds' shelter in the mountains in case of rain.





One cannot help but admire such beauty....





Processionary.



On the way up you will encounter many lizards.
But someone who is already on the Avvocata is waiting for me.
There's also some fruit to quench your thirst.
Just a little beat and here she comes to take it straight from my hands.



Vipers are not like lizards.
Yet my recklessness often leads me to
challenge them.
The first two are dead but the one at
the bottom of the bottle is alive....
and she wasn't the only one caught by me.





A particularly clear day.
In the background you can clearly see Vesuvius.
Opposite photo:
Belvedere area, on an esplanade
of lapillus accumulated after
the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD.



Devotion



Finally on the Avvocata.
Before my eyes the cave
of the Apparition.





Praying





One of the many gifts given to Our Lady.



In the square in front of the statue of the Redentore.





Even when the Church is closed,
prayer finds no obstacles.



Friends

Late 1990s.

Opposite photo: in front of the church with Giovanni Marino and his wife Clelia Laudano. A group photo with some friends who accompanied me on the Avvocata: Carrano Andrea and consort, Esposito Raffaele and consort, Di Foschia Giuseppe, Di Bianco Giuseppe, Apicella Gerardo, Marino Giovanni and consort, Gambardella Michele and consort.



Opposite photo: in front of the church with Giovanni Marino and his wife Clelia Laudano.





In the Apparition Cave with a great friend of mine, who often kept me company, Stefan Loser. He left us prematurely on 9 January 1999 and will now precede us into Heaven.



August 2020.
Ascent in the company of
Carlo Verna and Maurizio.





S.Natale 2008

Grazie Filippel

Auguri!
Filippel

With Stefano Della Pietra and Nora Vuilleumier.



A climb with brave young men: my nephew Gaetano Civale, Stefano Della Pietra, Giuseppe Della Pietra and Stefano della Pietra jr.





In front of the cave with Stefano Della Pietra jr and Sonia.



My son-in-law Gabriele was among the many who kept me company.

Next to a blueberry plant,
from whose fruits a
digestive liqueur is obtained.





With slightly younger friends.

With the judges of a running race Minori-Maiori-Monte Falerzio.





The party.
In the foreground, deservedly, is Carmine Di Martino.



20 November 2021.

Around the statue of St Joseph with Mary, Tiziana and Bianca Maria.

The story of Giacomo Cacchione: "At the Avvocata with Filippo".

I had already been to the Avvocata several times, but always starting from the Badia di Cava, never from Maiori. Today, finally, the time has come to live this experience. The group is not large, the kind that makes our guide Cucco turn up his nose at it, but just the right number to live an unforgettable experience. I was accompanied by Virginia, my sister-in-law and promoter of the initiative, Giuseppe, my son, who stubbornly wanted to follow us despite the great fatigue and heat that awaited us, and Filippo, over 80 years old, but with the physique of a 40 year old and the mind of a 30 year old, an exceptional guide and motivator, and a profound connoisseur of the mountains that lead to the sanctuary of the Madonna dell'Avvocata, to which he is deeply devoted. If I have decided to write this story today it is thanks to him, an extraordinary example to know and follow for the passion he has for the mountains and for the joy he feels in being able to transmit his teachings to others. Everyone was on time at the start of the day and we set off immediately in his pandina towards the start of the path from a small road a couple of kilometres after the town of Maiori on the Amalfi coast. The path starts out immediately uphill on stone steps, but soon enters the woods and is completely covered by vegetation. Unlike the path that starts from the Casale, in fact, this one is completely covered. And with the heat today, that's a real bonus! The fatigue is felt immediately, especially for Giuseppe, who suffers from the heat and shows signs of collapse after the first half hour of walking. But Filippo intervenes with his skills of dragger and motivator. He gives Giuseppe the energy he lacks, also thanks to a harness he has recently patented, thanks to which he offers help to those in need. It is a leather harness worn like a rucksack, equipped with extensions that serve as supports. And so Filippo offers one of these extensions to Giuseppe who, holding it, is literally pulled by Filippo. The aid is not insignificant, it serves to alleviate physical and mental fatigue. Filippo takes care of the rest with his encouragement and his stories, which he doses with care at every stop. The path is really hard because today the heat is sultry and unbearable, but with a little rest and a hot drink of lemon and honey that he offers us, the energies are soon recovered and the walk becomes lighter. In the short stretches where the wood thins out and the path opens out, we can see the sanctuary, built on a sheer rocky ridge at 827 metres above sea level, on Monte Falerzio (1041 metres), also known as Monte dell'Avvocata. The view of the sanctuary gives us a sense of how far we have come, but also of what remains, which is still a long way to go, so the stops are brief, just enough time for a drink and to catch our breath. The last rocky, uncovered and very scenic stretch is really exciting, until we reach the gate that leads to the grotto located just below the sanctuary, where the miraculous apparition of the Madonna took place back in 1485.

It was then that a young shepherd from Maiori, Gabriele Cinnamo, while grazing his goats, discovered the cave in the woods of Mount Falerzio.

Following a dream in which the Virgin Mary asked him to build an altar there, the young man quit his job and retired to hermitage on the mountain, collecting offerings to build a chapel with an altar in the cave. In 1503, with the consent of Pope Leo X, a church was built on the rock above and a bell tower with three bells was erected. Still today the sanctuary is the destination of numerous pilgrims who reach it with immense devotion from Cava dei Tirreni, Maiori and Cetera. And so it was for us today, that after much effort and sweat we arrived on the square in front of the majestic sanctuary.

Here the stop is dutifully prolonged, not only the classic change of jersey and the small snack, today the mind and soul are refreshed for the heartfelt meditation in thanksgiving to the Madonna for having assisted us in the ascent to the mountain and for the admiration that one feels looking at the Amalfi Coast from up here, a unique point of view, an extraordinary satisfaction at the thought that we have arrived with our legs and with our strength. Before resuming the walk, we took the usual photo and we were amazed to see that Filippo had also managed to befriend a lizard, which at his call came out of its hole and accepted a few pieces of fish offered by his own hand. What can I say! An exceptional day spent with an exceptional person, who I had known for about twenty years, but on this occasion I got to know him even better and appreciate his inexhaustible resources.

Happy trails.



The Family



1987.

Four generations.

Together with my father Gaetano, my son Gaetano and my first newborn grandson Filippo.

My parents



Maria Sammarco
(02.02.1916 - 13.03.2014)

Gaetano Civale
(19.09.1912 - 23.07.2010)



My aunt Sister Donata

Sister Donata was my mother's older sister.

At her 100th birthday party I read these words:

On the occasion of the celebrations organised in honour of Sister Donata (Aunt Nun) on her 100th birthday, I turned to the memory of my mother, Sister Donata's sister, who at the beautiful age of 98 still has clear memories of the years she spent with her sister before she entered the convent.

My mother reminded me that when she was about 16, her sister was forced by her parents to go and work as a maid for a noble family in Amalfi, as the poverty of those times forced the members of the family to contribute to the sustenance and survival of the family.

In 1931, the voice of the Lord made itself heard and the vocation began to grow in her soul, so much so that she told her parents, but they did not want to give their consent because, in order to be part of a monastic community, it was necessary and indispensable to have linen, a dowry and a small financial contribution, which was not possible for them at that time.





One opportunity was to find someone who was in a good financial position and who, in secret, would guarantee and provide for the maintenance of those who wanted to become nuns.

At one point, through her spiritual father, there was a possibility of entering a convent in Pompeii, but once again her parents did not want to give their consent. In spite of these objections, the desire to marry Jesus did not leave her.

She therefore had to wait until she came of age, 21 at the time, and with the help of the gentlemen where she worked, she prepared a small trousseau. In 1938, he left his family and embarked on the path he had longed for, reaching the Franciscan Poor Clare convent in Rome 75 years ago.

A mysterious thing happened: as soon as she crossed the threshold of the convent, the hair she had lost years ago due to severe intoxication following her parents' rejection began to grow again and her health improved.

And today, 9 November 2013, at the ripe old age of 100, surrounded by the affection of you sisters, she is celebrated in the bosom of her family.

'I am the resurrection and life'

Come, bride of Christ!

The Mother Superior, with profound sadness, shares the news that on 2nd January at 2.15 pm, has been welcomed in the Father's embrace:

Sr Maria Donata of the Divine Hearth, Sammarco Anna

Aged 104, after 94 years of religious life.

Born in Maiori (Sa) on 9th November 1913 from Giuseppe and Minella Angela.

She entered the 'probandato' on 3rd March 1942 in Bertinoro.

She entered the novitiate on 22nd July 1942 in Bertinoro.

She made her temporary vows on 24th July 1943 in Bertinoro.

She made her perpetual vows on 12th August 1946 in Rome.

She has lived and acted with kindness and generosity of heart in the following communities:

Rome, via Vicenza - Bertinoro, seminary - Ravenna - Moliterno - Civita Castellana

Bertinoro

Sr Donata has always been a discrete and quiet presence, in constant prayer, attentive to the needs of everyone, generous in the service and in the sacrifice for others: she has always had a smile and a nice word for everyone. 'Donata' (gifted) by name and actions.

After the perpetual vows, Sr Donata served the Seminary in Bertinoro for 28 years and still to date many priests remember her as a referral point, always welcoming and available to everyone.

In light of the various needs of the Province, she has always replied 'Our Lord is even there' and was embracing every new reality with the strength of the Holy Rosary and the prayer of the Liturgy of the Hours.

To those who asked what message to give, especially to the youths that have just started the journey of following Jesus Christ, she replied: 'Do not get frightened, in life you will find good and evil. I have found myself at home in every house, I have always tried to do my best, for what was in my capacities. I didn't mind what job I was asked to do, I always saw where there was a need and I did it. Always try to walk with righteousness, and the Lord will be near to you'

When in her life, always spent for Jesus in a journey of profound daily faithfulness, having reached almost 100-year old, we asked what she thought of the Big Transition towards Eternity, she replied: 'Death is scary for everyone, and I am scared too, because in life no matter how much we believe to be right, we never fully are! Looking at Jesus, He alone is the Right one, together with St Joseph, Our Lady and the Saints! If we walk in a path of

righteousness, or if we walk in a path of sin.. the Lord knows it. He came for the sinners, that is why He gives us time for repentance.

Having arrived in Bertinoro in 2004, old and sick, was cared for with patience and love, Sr Donata always had words of thanksgiving, love and blessings for everyone always assuring a prayer to everyone. In the silence of sickness, lived with great dignity and surrender, she has always given witness of sacrifice and profound sharing with the mystery of Christ that she was learning from the Holy Rosary that she was praying very frequently, asking for the companionship of Mary and with the litanies that she was constantly praying.

We carry in our hearts the precious inheritance of this our Sister that has been able to render real and concrete the charism of Mother Serafina in living every day the Gospel of Christ and in giving us the grace of going back to what is essential, to the virtue of patience that guards the heart, to charity that renders docile, to faith that all hopes.

We are sure that from Heaven, together with Mother Serafina, sr Donata will keep on guide and bless our lives and those of our religious family.

Lord, we pray for our sister Sr Donata.

You that in this mortal life have surrounded her with immense love, making her your bridegroom, let her enter in the eternal rest of your Reign, free from every pain, to sing endlessly your glory. Now that for her the things of this world have passed, carry her in the reign of light, where there is peace and joy eternal.

Amen

*Sr Antonella Chicoli
Provincial Secretary*

10th September 2021, 60 years of marriage.

I thank the guardian angel for having put a wonderful woman, my wife Lina, at my side.

I went up and am still going up to the Shrine because of your sacrifices and your care for me.

I could never have done it alone.

I wish everyone, especially the young people who read me, to respect their companion always, for all the days that Our Lady and the Lord grant them.

It's not a few years that we've been together:
60 years since their wedding day and 3 more before engagement.







With my children: Gaetano, Umberto and Anna Maria.



With all her grandchildren Filippo, Gaetano, Manica, Manuel, Carmen, Ileana, and Melany.
And with great-grandchildren Carmine and Cristian Gabriele.



My mother called Marica and she is my niece (Anna Maria's daughter).
They are Carmine and Cristian Gabriele.
The equipped bike is always the same.



THIRD PART

The Sanctuary of the Avvocata



*The following text is taken from the booklet by
D. Simeone Leone O. S. B. - BADIA DI CAVA - 1985*

Foreword

This year 1985 marks the fifth centenary of Our Lady's apparition to the shepherd Gabriele Cimiamo of Ponteprimario, which is the origin of the Avvocata sanctuary above Maiori.

In order to solemnise this auspicious occasion and to satisfy the wishes of the faithful, which have been expressed many times, the Rev. Abbot Father Michele Marra has decided to compose these brief historical notes.

Actually, the scholar Gaetano Mansi di Scala (1744-1817), who was able to consult the archives of the Avvocata before its suppression in 1807 and, in particular, its Platea, now lost, composed in his time the *Notizie su Cronache della gloriosissima Vergine dell'Avvocata della città di Maiori*.

The Chronicles of Mansi are preserved among the scholar's manuscripts donated to the Abbey of Cava by Miss Eleonora Mansi in 1970 and from them we have extracted the news prior to the suppression, while for the more recent news we have used original documents.

May these brief remarks make faith and devotion to our Avvocata grow in the hearts of the faithful.

Simeone Leone

Origin of the Sanctuary



The sanctuary of Maria SS.ma dell'Avvocata, situated at an altitude of 827 metres on Mount Falerzio in front of the Amalfi Coast, was built in 1485 at the behest of the Madonna. In November of that year, Our Lady appeared to the shepherd Gabriele Cimiamo of Pontepriamo, a hamlet of Malori, and told him: "Gabriel, leave the animals, build a chapel in my name, and I will be your Avvocata always". Two days earlier, Gabriel, who was grazing the goats of Mr and Mrs Mezzacapo from Salerno on that mountain with the help of the 7-year-old boy Dattilo De Paredo, had noticed that a dove was coming and going among the branches of a large ivy adhering to the rock. He thought there was a nest behind the ivy and, looking for it the next day, could not find it.

But on the third day he made a hole, removing the earth and the red clay that was behind the ivy, and it seemed to him that there was still a void behind it. He enlarged the hole and let little Dactylus in with a lighted candle: thus he discovered a beautiful cave. Satisfied with his discovery, he returned to the place where he kept his goats and went to sleep. In a dream, he saw Our Lady, who made him a consoling promise. That dream came back to him in the following days and so he resolved first of all to explore the cave. He found a place where the rock was friable and dug an opening through which he could easily enter, drained the water he found there, cleaned the cave and thought of starving his home with the firm intention of carrying out the will of the Madonna. So he resigned from the Half-bosses and obtained from Abbot Pinto Staibano of the Abbey of S. Maria de Olearia, to which the mountain belonged, the use of the cave and the surrounding wood, obliging himself to give a pound of wax every year. He took the habit of a hermit and called himself Fra Gabriele. The hermit Brother Gabriel lived on alms and had an abundance of them, so much so that he was soon able to build an altar in the cave and, having made a calcara, with the help of many workers he began to build the church above the cave. When the church was finished, he built the bell tower with three bells: two small ones and a large one of 10.80 quintals (12 cantars).

Lethic Eremitage

In order not to be left alone, Gabriel persuaded the devout weaver Giovanni de Cascetta to leave his trade and become a hermit, and in 1508 he took the habit together with another man called Fra Giovanni da Napoli. The first hermits, through their work, planted fruit trees and two vineyards, which in time yielded up to 20 barrels of wine. One of the vineyards, which is now abandoned, remains in the name of the place called Vigna vecchia. Two servants drove the mules that carried the necessities of life to the sanctuary, and the mules were transported along the fairly easy road from Avvocata to the Corpo di Cava. Brother Gabriel welcomed everyone with great charity and, if necessary, distributed everything he had. Thus devotion grew and Providence was never lacking.

When sailors from Positano, Vietri and other places sailed their boats across the sea from which they saw the sanctuary, they made vows and offered silver chalices, tablecloths and other religious objects as gifts; other devotees imitated them by offering necklaces, rings and other precious objects.

Brother Gabriel, after an exemplary life, died in 1521 at the age of 80 and was buried in the grotto, which also served as a burial place for other priests who wished to rest in Our Lady's grotto. In 1612, his body was exhumed and transported to the church he had built above the cave. An instrument was made of this exhumation, a copy of which was consulted by Mansi.

At the time of Brother Gabriel's death there were in the hermitage Brother Giovanni de Cascetta, Brother Giovanni da Napoli, Brother Francesco, Brother Gabriel's nephew, Brother Bernardino Inperato, Brother Giacomo and other brothers. Brother Giovanni de Cascetta, as the first companion of Brother Gabriel, was appointed prior, but did not have an easy life. A usurper brought desolation to the sanctuary: he stripped the church of its furnishings and took them to his house, sold the mules and dismissed the friars, some of whom became priests, others returned to the world. For a year the hermitage remained deserted, but then the patient Fra Giovanni started again: he managed to salvage some things with the help of his friend Vinciguerra Miracapilli from Maiori and rebuilt the damaged things, in particular the two vineyards and the cell that Fra Gabriele had built not far from the bell tower.

The devotion to Our Lady Avvocata was rekindled and the people, knowing that Brother John had returned to the hermitage, began to bring offerings again.

II Canon D. Annibale Lanario did even more: he renounced the canonry and became a friar of the Avvocata (instrument of the notary Giovanni Luise Cinnamo, fol. 130 of the Platea). D. Annibale, however, in 1539 was requested by the University of Maiori and created Provost of the Collegiate Church of the same town.

Fra Giovanni was succeeded by other hermit friars who took care of the sanctuary: Dio de Cuccalo, who for the needs of the sanctuary kept his son Fra Salvatore, a Conventual Franciscan and priest; Angelo Apicella, former mason of the hamlet of Vescite; Fr. Angelo Cannalonga, former sacristan of S. Maria a Mare who, after taking the habit of a hermit, became a priest; Scipione Imperato who was called Fra Antonio and died in the city of Sezze on 28th August 1609.

When Fra Antonio died, the Avvocata remained without hermits, and since the church of Avvocata had been detached from the abbey of S. Maria de Olearia, on whose property it had been built, and entrusted to the hermits, the archbishop of Amalfi Monsignor Giulio Rossini thought of entrusting it to the priest D. Pompeo. However, the Jesuit Bernardo da Ponte, a great devotee of Our Lady of the Avvocata, persuaded the archbishop to continue to receive the hermits and to entrust them with the care of the sanctuary, as this was Our Lady's first wish. With the archbishop's consent, therefore, the sanctuary continued as before and, according to Mansi, this was a good thing, "because otherwise Avvocata would no longer be a place for hermits but for herds of goats and cows, as happened to two other vast abbeys, one named S. Nicolò a Carbonara and the other S. Maria". A cleric from S. Maria a Mare, D. Lonardo from the city of Salerno, who had been animal keeper in Maiori, put on the habit of a hermit, became a priest and confessor and was called Brother Lonardo. He did so much good that the number of believers increased. Therefore, when he died in November 1621, he was buried with honour in the church of Avvocata and the people mourned him. When Brother Lonardo died, only Brother Ubaldo, a layman from Naples, remained as a hermit, and from time to time a priest came up to celebrate Holy Mass. Bernardo da Ponte testified that, after the death of Brother Gabriel, for about 50 years the lamp was rarely lit and Mass was celebrated, and that the hermit lived elsewhere for ten months of the year, in order to live, and left the key at the foot of a tree, where it was found by those who came to the sanctuary.



Miraculous statue of Our Lady



On the 21th April 1590, a small gilded statue of Our Lady was brought to the church of Avvocata. Made to be the protector of Neapolitan galleys, it was placed on Mount Falerzio by divine disposition to be a star that would direct seafarers in this part of the world towards heaven. And to demonstrate her power and increase the devotion of the people, Our Lady was pleased to perform miraculous signs.

On 13th April 1626, Easter Monday and the annual feast day of the Avvocata, among others, the brethren of the congregation of the Corpo di Cava came up bringing a gift of a precious lily and, while a priest was celebrating Holy Mass

in the presence of 600 people, Our Lady began to weep and sweat, her face, which had been pleasant and festive, appeared frightening and terrible, so much so that those present were moved and began to cry, shouting: mercy! Some of them then, out of penitence, dragged their tongues across the floor.

By order of the archbishop of Amalfi, the statue was locked up in a cell and, when unveiled to the public some time later, appeared in its normal state.

But the sweat phenomenon repeated itself again.

On the 18th April 1626, a number of women from the village of Molina went up to the Avvocata and with them a young man called Antonio, who was the servant of Giuseppe Di Mauro. He was possessed by the devil and, exorcised by the parish priest of Molina, D. Simone, he had told him in the name of the Lord. Simone, had told him on behalf of those who owned him: "There is no need to bother you, take me to the Madonna dell'Avvocata and I will come out".

Antonio walked barefoot and quietly along the road, but when he reached the door of the Avvocata Church, he began to shout and do strange things in the presence of many people.

The priest D. Domenico, who was present, not having the book to exorcise him, put the blessed stole on his head and recited some prayers but, not having obtained the desired effect, he went out of the Church and begged a person to go and get the book for exorcisms.

When he returned to the church, the possessed man said to him: "You have sent for the book, but it is of no use". In fact, some time later he came to his senses, almost waking up from sleep, and, by the grace of Our Lady, he remained free and healthy. This healing encouraged others to turn to Our Lady of the Avvocata to obtain the liberation of the possessed.

On the 25th of April 1626 some people from Raito brought to the Avvocata a woman called Antonia, who had been possessed by the devil for seven years; on the 26th of the same month some women from the Corpus Cava brought there another obsessed woman called Caterina, and both obtained the grace of liberation, but Caterina after being exorcised by the Jesuit father Bernardo da Ponte. Word of these miraculous events having spread, on 29th April of the same year 28 fathers from the Badia di Cava went up to the Avvocata to venerate the miraculous Madonna. From Dragonea, however, they brought another possessed woman named Joan and she too was freed. It was then the turn of a blind man who, on 6 May, was carried by two men and regained his sight.

On the 10th May, two processions moved from Tramonti and there was also a crowd of over 3,000 people from Cava and Salerno. One of the people who came from Salerno was a certain Anella Bonomo, who had never left home except to go to Mass on feast days. She was so enthusiastic that in fifteen days she went up five times and did her best to get others to make the pilgrimage with her.

In May 1673, the nobleman from Salerno, Gabriele Ruggi, who was seriously ill and had been dismissed by the doctors, invoked Our Lady of the Avvocata after three days without eating, and immediately asked for something to eat. On the following feast day, he went to thank Our Lady, bringing as a gift two silver candlesticks, from which the censer was made, 26 carlins for two grains and 30 Venice candles. Before leaving, he wanted to kiss the feet of all the brothers of whom he had been a guest, participating in all their pious exercises. The votive tablets found by the Camaldolese Fathers when they took possession of the Avvocata, which at the time of Mansi appeared old and deteriorated by time, were evidence of many other graces granted by the Madonna dell'Avvocata.

The last of the lay priors was Carlo Imperato, who had been a doctor and father of three children who had died before him. When his wife Geronima da Ponte died, he embraced the clerical state and became a secular priest, then took the hermit's habit and became prior.

Camaldolese hermitage

D. Carlo was still on Sull'Avvocata as prior and Geronimo Manzo as hermit, when the University of Maiori put the sanctuary at the disposal of the Camaldolese Fathers of the Montecorona Congregation.

In fact, during the plague of 1656, Dr Orazio Caso, who was a victim of the epidemic, bequeathed all his possessions to the Fathers of the Hermitage of the Holy Saviour of Naples with the obligation to found a new hermitage for their Congregation wherever they thought best. The inheritance was contested by some of Dr Caso's relatives who, according to Neapolitan custom, were entitled to half of the above-mentioned property. Therefore, several years passed during which they searched for a way to use the sum available, now reduced to half. The way was finally found when the town of Maiori offered the Avvocata to the Camaldolese. Their General Chapter, which met in Montecorona on 20th April 1687, elected Father Priniano from Naples as founder with the title of superior and within a year he had four cells built. Then the Diet of 1688 elevated the Avvocata hermitage to the rank of Priory and elected Fr Priniano himself as Prior, and up to twelve cells were built. The Camaldolese hermitage of Santa Maria dell'Avvocata had as its neighbours the abbeys of S. Niccolò a Carbonara, S. Maria de Olearia and S. Maria de Stellis or Vistellis, which at the time of the Mansi were the property of the Amalfi Chapter by concession of Pope Gregory XIII made by a bull in 1580; therefore the pound of worked wax which Fra Gabriele gave to S. Maria de Olearia for the use of the grotto and the wood and which at the time of D. Carlo Imperato had been converted into a census of 1 tari and 10 grana, was paid to the Amalfi Chapter on the eve of Easter. On the other hand, the Vigna Vecchia and the Campo Martino tower, formerly belonging to the Imperato family, were owned by the Hermitage.

The Camaldolese hermits did not stop with the constructions made at the time of their arrival on Falerzio. Some tombstones affixed on the walls of the Church and preserved by Mansi assure us that the Church was enlarged and consecrated on 16th May 1709 by Monsignor Nicola Guerriero, Bishop of Scala, and that on 16th March 1741 the four minor altars of Our Lady of Sorrows, S. Romualdo, the Crucifix and S. Antonio Padova were consecrated by the Major Prior of the Camaldolese. Romualdo, of the Crucifix and of St. Anthony of Padua were consecrated by the Prior Major of the Camaldolesi D. Clemente D'Oriolo and that the same Prior Major on the 22nd of June 1743, on request and at the expense of the Vatican Chapter, crowned with gold crowns the Madonna of the Avvocata and her divine Infant. In the church there was also a plaque with the Camaldolese coat of arms and the inscription: "in unum sunt congregati" which indicated the place where the deceased monks were buried. The cult of Our Lady of the Avvocata grew more and more in the 120 years of the Camaldolese hermits' stay on Falerzio, and the holy life of these religious men aroused the admiration of the people of Maiori and all the inhabitants of the surrounding villages.

Suppression of the Camaldolese Hermitage

The life of the sanctuary was abruptly interrupted when, in 1807, Napoleon's brother, King Joseph Bonaparte of Naples, issued laws suppressing religious orders: the monks were expelled, their property confiscated and a military post was set up on the Avvocata. The soldiers of the detachment stationed there immediately did a lot of damage, despite the presence of a caretaker to prevent it; among other things, the library with 2,000 volumes was ruined and many books were stolen and sold for a small sum of money. The remaining books were placed in 33 boxes and taken to Salerno at considerable expense. The person in charge of saving the remaining books was the commander of the 2nd provincial battalion, Raffaele Mansi, who had 12 legionnaires accompany the expedition to Salerno.

The miraculous statue of the Madonna, deprived of the golden crowns by the rapacity of the French, was assigned to the Collegiate of Maiori, where the people solemnly accompanied it in procession; the small bells and the marble altars were also donated to the Collegiate of Maiori, but the big bell, because difficult to transport, was melted down on site and sent to the royal foundries; the crucifix was assigned to the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie and the goods, forfeited by the tax authorities, in the Concordat of 1818 were given to the Badia Cava as compensation for the loss of goods suffered with the Napoleonic suppression. The crucifix was assigned to the Church of S. Maria delle Grazie in Maiori and the goods, forfeited by the tax authorities, were given to the Abbey of Cava in the Concordat of 1818 as compensation for the loss of goods suffered during the Napoleonic suppression. The buildings were no longer cared for and soon the lack of maintenance, the bad weather and a fire in the Church, possibly arson, reduced everything to a pile of ruins.

Rebirth of the Sanctuary

The nefarious work of the revolution had thus destroyed the sanctuary wanted by the Virgin on Falerzio, and with that it seemed that the last word had been said about the Avvocata. But the revolution, which had destroyed the sanctuary, had not extinguished the faith and devotion of the people towards their Avvocata.

It was this devotion that prompted the mason Antonio Mansi from Maiori to visit Sull'Avvocata several times and, lamenting the state in which that venerated place was reduced, to clean the altar of the grotto and to bring to light the frescoes made almost invisible by the vegetation that the dripping water and humidity had caused to grow. The altar was frescoed with the Virgin Mary appearing to Gabriel, Jesus' Last Supper and, on the frontispiece, the Annunciation to Mary.

Anthony also took care to keep a lamp lit, which he supplied with oil, and to decorate the altar with fresh flowers. The people, especially those of Maiori, began to frequent the grotto and to go on pilgrimage in groups. Our Lady then wanted to show her appreciation and revive even more the faith of her faithful in her powerful intercession with a miracle.

One day a dying seven-year-old girl was brought to the cave in the hope of being cured, but her condition prompted her relatives to have the coffin prepared just in case. When the coffin was brought into the cave, the girl made a perfect recovery. The fame of this event spread everywhere and devotees competed to help resurrect the shrine.



A commission was then formed by the people of Maiori to collect donations, build a new church and rebuild the Sanctuary.

However, as the commission could not operate in all the surrounding towns, the chairman Angelantonio D'Amato, who was mayor of Maiori, wrote a letter on the 24th of January 1897 to Fra Romano Lannelli of the Badia di Cava, whose devotion to Our Lady of the Avvocata he knew, asking him to join the commission with other devotees from Cavia in order to collect offerings for the Avvocata.

Brother Romano was a remarkable personality and, although a lay brother, he was the factotum of the Abbey. It was therefore fateful that, once he had committed himself, Fra Romano would become the factotum of the Avvocata. So he formed the commission, collected the offerings from Cava and with his own money and the offerings collected he bought the surrounding woodland, which the second suppression of the Italian Government had requisitioned again and sold to the highest bidder, and on the old ruins he built the Church, the guesthouse for pilgrims and a small monastery for the religious who would serve in the sanctuary.

This was recognised by the Rivista Ecclesiastica Amalfitana, which wrote on 15 May 1921:

"The ruins, testifying to the past, sent out a voice pleading for resurrection. And the voice... moved the soul of a son of St Benedict, who, trusting in the help of Providence, set about the work of reconstruction. Today the new temple, swift and solemn, so severe in its lines, so elegant in its white walls, with 18 cells erected on the right and the guest quarters on the left, a marvellous contrast of new buildings in the midst of the deserted ruins of the Hermitage, is all the work of the Benedictine Fra Romano lannelli who conceived and executed it with the generous donations of the surrounding peoples".

Fra Romano also had the frescoes painted by the painter Achille Guerra, who was a friend of the monks and often worked and stayed in the Badia di Cava.

Under the vault of the nave of the church, he painted a vision of St. Romuald who, during Holy Mass, saw his sons ascending to heaven on a mysterious ladder in ecstasy. On the wall of the apse, he painted a fresco of Our Lady of the Assumption and the Apostles peering into his empty tomb. The sketch of a detail of the fresco on the vault, now ruined by humidity, is among the paintings on canvas in the Badia and represents the Camaldolese monks listening to the Holy Mass of St Romuald in ecstasy. With the permission of the archbishop of Amalfi in September 1897 the church was blessed by the abbot D. Benedetto Bonazzi, who was later archbishop of Benevento.



It was perhaps on this occasion that the Municipality of Maiori donated to the Badia a polyptych by Gaetano Capone, representing the 4 Holy Fathers of Cavensi.

After the erection of the walls, an attempt was made for eight years to find religious to officiate at the sanctuary, but unfortunately it was not possible to obtain them either from the Camaldolese or the Carmelites or others, despite the fact that the abbot

D. Silvano De Stefano had generously made available the small convent of S. Vincenzo near the Badia for the religious of Avvocata to stay in during the winter months, when the climate makes it difficult to stay on Falenzio.

Therefore, in his last years, Brother Romano asked Abbot Monsignor Nicolini to have the monks of the Abbey officiate at the Avvocata, and this was

done and continued to be done after Brother Romano's death on 28th June 1923 at the age of 84.

Brother Romano had placed a statue dressed in cloths in veneration on the Avvocata, which was not considered suitable by Abbot Mgr Ildefonso Rea (1929-45).

In Ortisei, in the Trentino, he had another one made entirely of wood and very devout, and it is the one that is now so enthusiastically venerated on the Avvocata. The sanctuary and the surrounding woodland, which became the property of the Abbey after Abbot D. Angelo Ettinger purchased it on 9 January 1913 from Umberto Gambardella, Giuseppe De Francesco and Vincenzo Scapicchio, into whose hands it

had come, is still run by the Benedictines, one of whom is the Rector. But neither the monks nor the Rector usually live on Falerzio: they go there on feast days and other occasions.

I The faithful, on the other hand, frequently make their ascent, either to visit Our Lady or to take a walk in the mountains. On the feast day, they come in large numbers to receive the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist and to express their love and gratitude to the Great Mother of God and Avvocata of sinners.

II Their cry of love, repeated a thousand times during the procession from the church to the grotto and again on the way down the mountain and back home, is: "Hurray for Mary and Who created her", interspersed with verses telling the story of the lucky shepherd Gabriel.



Prayer to Mary Most Holy Avvocata

Holy Virgin, who was pleased to choose the summit of this mountain as the seat of your power and the throne of your immense mercy, deign to accept the filial homage that we have come to lay here at your feet, recognising you as the True Mother of God, our Mother, Lady and Avvocata.

Just as the mystical dove wandering around this Shrine pointed out to us the refuge of your maternal protection, so may our souls, gathered around you, always experience the effectiveness of your patronage.

Stretch out your merciful hands over us to defend us from every danger of soul and body, to sustain us along the path of life, to guide us to the safe harbour of Eternity. You, who boast of the title of Avvocata for sinners, plead our cause with Your Divine Son and obtain for us the grace to live and die holy. Amen.

Three Hail Marys.



Hymn of the Avvocata

Sull'alto Falerzio
con canti giulivi
saliamo festivi
con gioia nel cor.

Evviva Maria,
Maria evviva,
Evviva Maria
e chi la creò.

La Vergine bella.
la Madre divina,
del cielo Regina,
ci attende lassù.

Evviva Maria...

“Qui voglio la fede,
qui voglio l'altare,
qui venga a pregare
chi m'ama di cor

Evviva Maria...

Sì disse a Gabriele
nell'erma spelonca
e il popoio lieto
a gara v'andò.

Evviva Maria...

O Madre divina
dell'eremo Avvocata,
io dico e ripeto
quest'inno d'amor.

Evviva Maria...

O Vergine bella,
o Madre di Dio,
in questo cuor mio
accendi l'amor.

Evviva Maria...

O stella del mare,
mia cara Maria,
dell'anima mia
sei l'unico fior.

Evviva Maria...

O mistica rosa
di pura fragranza,
in cielo la stanza
prepara per me.

Evviva Maria...

In questa mia vita
di pianto e dolore
la gioia del core,
o Madre, sei Tu.

Evviva Maria...

Explanation of the cover



A tree is depicted on the cover.

It represents a centuries-old lime tree that used to be found on the old road to the Avvocata. We admire its grandeur. Next,



various fires have literally destroyed it.



In the meantime, regrowth has also started...
let's hope for the best.



Photos courtesy of Dott. Giacchino Di Martino.

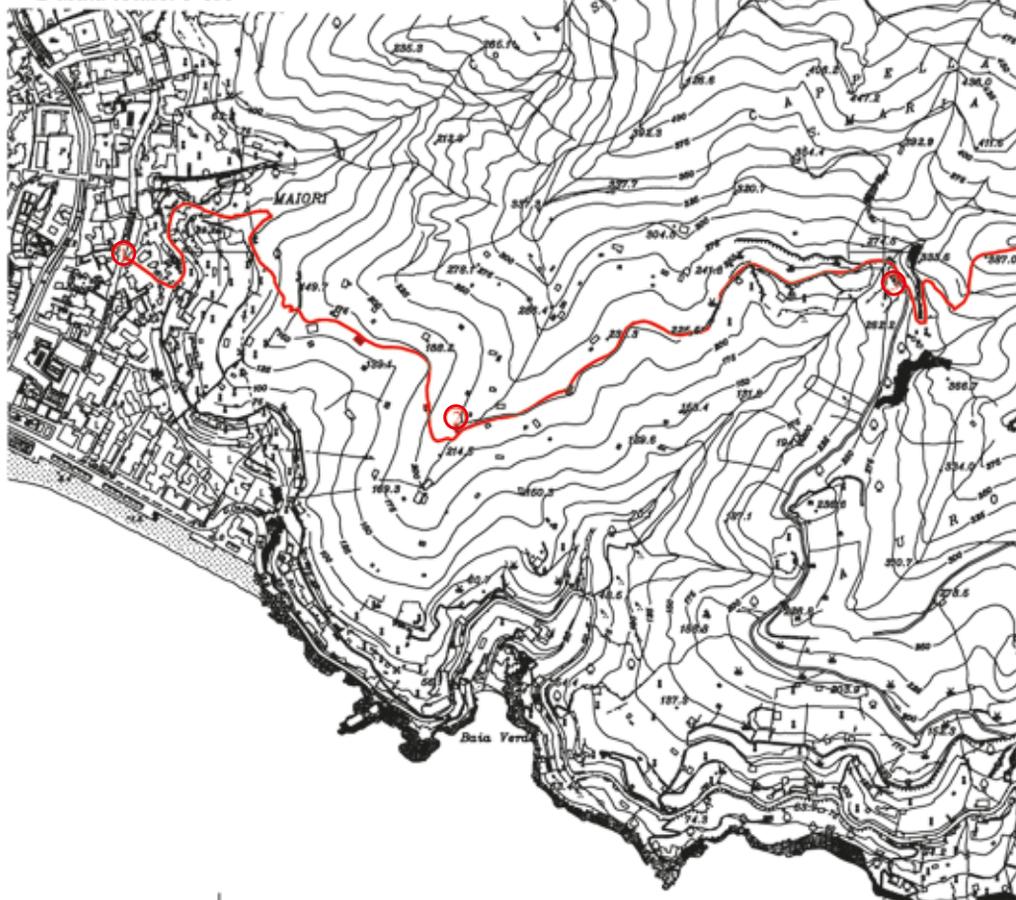
How to reach the Sanctuary

LEGENDA

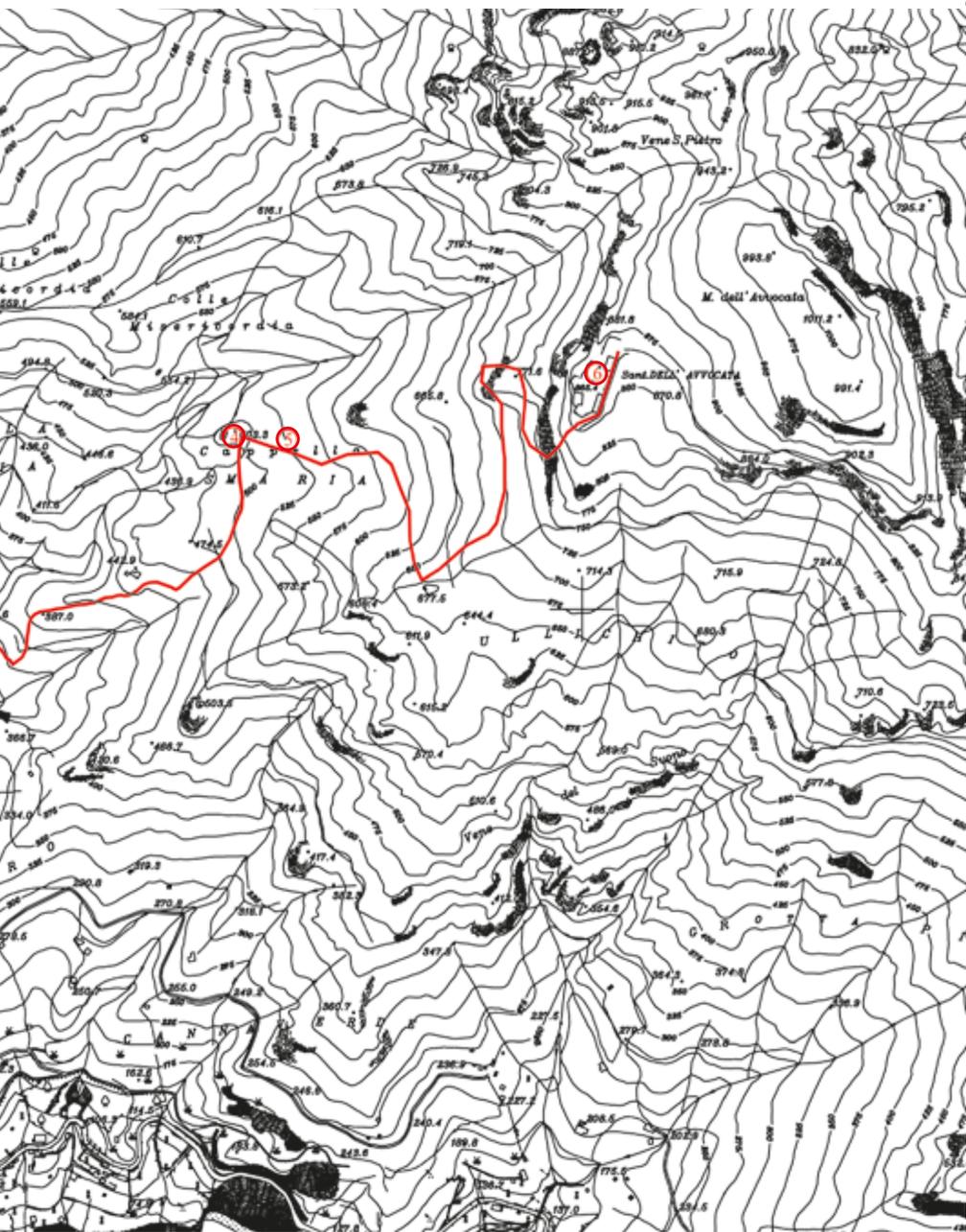
- ① Via Casale Dei Cicerali
- ② Località "Casa Rossa"
- ③ Località "Scalese" (sorgente d'acqua)
- ④ Località "Santa Maria "
- ⑤ Località " Acqua del Castagno" (sorgente d'acqua)
- ⑥ Santuario Della Madonna dell' Avvocata

Difficoltà "E" (Moderato)

Durata totale: 5 ore



My map (Maiori center to the Avvocata)



Conclusion



*Thank you, Mother, for entrusting me to
the protection of the Blessed Virgin Avvocata.
My ascent continues... save me a seat.
Your son Philip*

Maiori, 8th December 2021, Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Appendix

At the Sanctuary to thank Mary



After my book's publication, on the 18th of December 2022 I went to thank Mary with my young friends: Anna, Caterina and Tiziana.

Book Presentation Maiori - 23 April 2022



The poster features the City of Maiori logo at the top left, which includes a ship icon and the text 'Città di MAIORI Città d'Avanti'. The title 'Presentazione del libro "LA MIA AVVOCATA" di Filippo Civile' is centered in red and black. Below the title, the date and time 'Sabato 23 Aprile 2022 ore 19.00' and the location 'Salone degli Affreschi - Palazzo Mezzacapo' are listed in red. The program details are organized into sections: 'Programma:', 'Saluti' (Antonio Capone, Sindaco), 'Interventi' (Rev. Don Michele Petruzzelli, O.S.B., Abate del Monastero della SS. Trinità di Cava de' Tirreni; Gerardo Russomando, Consulente aziendale; Carlo Verna, Giurista RAI; Donato Sarno, Storico), 'Moderatore' (Peppe Risoldi, Giornalista), and 'Sarà presente l'Autore.'. A note at the bottom states 'La serata sarà allietata con musiche a tema dei' followed by a small circular logo with a sun and the word 'Civale'.

Presentazione del libro
“LA MIA AVVOCATA”
di Filippo Civile

Sabato 23 Aprile 2022 ore 19.00
Salone degli Affreschi - Palazzo Mezzacapo

Programma:

Saluti
Antonio Capone, Sindaco

Interventi
Rev. Don Michele Petruzzelli, O.S.B.
Abate del Monastero della SS. Trinità di Cava de' Tirreni
Gerardo Russomando, Consulente aziendale
Carlo Verna, Giurista RAI
Donato Sarno, Storico

Moderatore
Peppe Risoldi, Giornalista

Sarà presente l'Autore.

La serata sarà allietata con musiche a tema dei



From the left: Carlo Verna, Gerardo Russomando, Don Nicola Mammato (Priest of the Catholic Church in Maiori), Ab. Michele Petruzzelli, Filippo Civile, Antonio Capone, Donato Sarno, Chiara Gambardella (Municipal Councilor)

Book launch- My Advocate, Filippo Civale
Saturday 23rd April, 7pm, Maiori

I am very grateful to be here with you this evening. I thank my dear friend Filippo, for the kind invitation. I want also to kindly express my regards to the Mayor of Maiori, Dr Antonio Capone, all the other members of the City Council and all you present here tonight.

I will be short because I am very eager to listen to Filippo, about whom I want to spend few words. Filippo Civale, is a mix of fatherly kindness, but also of strength and patience. A man who has dedicated his entire life to family life, with a discreet and industrious dedication of a man of another generation. With his 86 years old, Filippo is a man who has a lot of personal history to share and pass to the next generations.

Judging from the few conversations we had, I can define Filippo as a box full of experience and wisdom. A man very attentive to relationships... and these days relationships have a crucial importance.

'To share and pass to the next generations', this I believe is the most profound conviction that has led Filippo in writing his book, *My Avvocata*, where he has collected and shared his memories of the Sanctuary of Our Lady Our Advocate placed above Maiori and share with the next generation his simple but strong devotion to the Virgin placed on the Mount Falesio.

Filippo, wrote his book, *My Avvocata*, more with his heart rather than as an actual author. As the prophet Jeremia said, 'from your mother's womb', Filippo has been consecrated to Our Lady Our Advocate. His mum Maria Sammarco, when 5-month-pregnant climbed to the Sanctuary to entrust him to Our Lady.

His faith and devotion to Our Lady are also strengthened by a more concrete devotion, Filippo attends the Convent of St Francis in Maiori, he goes every evening to daily mass. When the weather is good, he also climbs the Mount Falesio, in a year he told me that he climbed it 118 times, twice a week.

In his book, full of pictures, the front page stands out with a picture of a tree- a secular linden- together with the picture with his own climbing equipment: a shirt with long sleeves, long and loose trousers, a protective net on his head, boots and two sticks.

I thank very dearly Filippo Civale – who as I said at the beginning I am very

eager to listen- I thank him for the easy read of this book or better for his testimony of life enriched with plenty of beautiful pictures.

This publication will be placed in the context of that fervent faith and devotion that has always animated pilgrims, rendering even more Holy the Sanctuary of Our Lady Our Advocate placed above Maiori.

Ab. Michele Petruzzelli OSB



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