

On the same day the **Blessed Virgin Mary** appeared to seven imprisoned Christians in the Hungarian town Kaniža which was then under the Turkish rule and said

"Do not fear, my children, have faith. I have been blind for over 40 years, and have regained my sight in Bistrica today".

Soon after that, Kaniža and the whole of Hungary was liberated from Turks.

Between 1688 and 1786, **1109 miracles** were recorded in **Bistrica**.



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STATUE OF BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



ENGLISH



Between 1676 and 1679 the parish priest of Bistrica was **Petar Brezarić**. On the second Sunday of September, during the mass, a beautiful woman in a blue dress came to him with a wax candle, saying:

"Pray with the people so that I get my sight back."

The priest wondered why the woman should pray for her when she could find her way to the pulpit and back to join the womenfolk.

On the same day, in the afternoon, when the priest and the chaplain were going to the feudal mansion of Malerić the parish collationer at Podgrađe, they saw the same woman who disappeared when they approached to reach her.

At the request of Martin Borković, the bishop of Zagreb, the priest of Bistrica Ivan Molitoris discovered the forgotten statue, which was found on **July 15, 1684**, and placed on the main altar between the statues of St. Peter and St. Paul. The following day, on Sunday, 16th July Magdalena Paulec, a noblewoman and a patron of the church, brought her paralysed daughter Katarina to the church, and after taking her round the altar three times, the girl was miraculously cured. Since that day, pilgrimages to Marija Bistrica have never stopped.

The statue is the work of an unknown local sculptor from 15th century. It is made of wood, black in colour, and is 112 cm tall.

The statue of Mary with baby Jesus was revered in a chapel on the hill of Vinski Vrh, near Marija Bistrica.

When in 1545, the Turks got as far as Konjščina, the parish priest of Bistrica transferred the statue to the parish church of St. Peter and Paul in Bistrica, and buried it under the choir to protect it from desecration.

One evening in **1588**, the parish priest **Luka** noticed a strange light under the choir in the church. On the following day, they discovered the statue of the Virgin.

As there was a further Turkish danger, in **1650**, the parish priest had the statue walled in so that only Mary's face was visible. The reverence began to decline.

