



## **Did Angels Carry Mary's House to Italy?**

Have you ever heard of the legend that angels carried Mary's childhood home from Jerusalem to Loreto, Italy? Read more here.

In the small town of Loreto, Italy, there is a house-turned-shrine known as the Basilica della Santa Casa, or the Sanctuary of the Holy House of Loreto. Within the shrine is the Santa Casa, or the Holy House, which has been visited by both Catholic and non-Catholic pilgrims as far back as the 1300s and holds important Marian artwork, including the "Black Madonna" and a statue attributed to St. Luke.

It's many visitors have included St. Therese of Lisieux and St. Francis de Sales and the popes Paul VI, St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis.

So why have so many Catholics visited this little house? Many believe this shrine was the Blessed Virgin Mary's childhood home where the angel Gabriel appeared to her at the Annunciation. Essentially, this place was where the Word actually became flesh. But wait...Mary didn't live in Italy, right?

Right. But according to pious legend, after Muslims invaded Jerusalem in 1291, a band of angels carried Mary's home to Loreto where it would be protected. While many people today doubt this story, interestingly enough, [historical documents](#) support the belief—though maybe not in the way you might expect.

In 1900, Pope Leo XIII's physician Joseph Lapponi found records in the Vatican archive indicating that at the Muslim conquest, a Byzantine family, the Angeli family, rescued materials and other objects from Mary's home. "Angeli" translates to "angels" in Latin and Greek!

While the Church has never taken an official stance on the Basilica della Santa Casa, however, the house continues to be a popular Catholic pilgrimage site, and thanks to the Vatican archives, we know that at least much of the contents were literally brought to Italy by a family of angels...the Angeli family!

To learn more interesting facts about the Mother of God, check out [Fr. David Vincent Meconi's 101 Surprising Facts About Mary](#).