

**LEGENDS OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN**  
**The Prisoner's Mother**  
***Mater Admirabilis - Admirable Mother***

She who during three long sad days was separated from her Divine Son, and recovered him with joy in the temple, can never be insensible to a mother's grief.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, a poor widow, of the Maritime Alps, whose support was derived from an only son, a fisherman, anxiously waited for his return one evening: but he came not.

There had been no tempest to excite her fear for his safety ; so, though the morning dawned, and he had not returned, she still hoped that some delay, for which she could not account, had prevented his reaching home sooner. But in a few hours, news arrived that her dear son and his companions had been taken prisoners by the Turks, and carried to Algiers or Tunis.

The poor mother wept bitterly at the thought of her son's captivity, without any mixture of selfish feelings. She possessed no means at ransoming him herself, but her hopes were placed on the good Fathers of Mercy—those pious servants of Mary devoted to the liberation of captives. But the religious, in her neighborhood, were now occupied in collecting alms for the ransom of Christian slaves, and could not depart for the African coast until after the winter. In the meantime, how severe were the son's sufferings, how bitter the mother's tears !

One day, while indulging her grief, she said to herself, " The good Fathers of the Redemption of captives are the humble servants of the Holy Virgin. It is she who guides and protects them. I will, then have recourse to her immediate assistance. When was she known to despise a mother's tears?"

A few leagues from her hut, there was a much-frequented chapel of our Lady. It is still a celebrated pilgrimage, near Nice, and is called, Our Lady's of the Little Lake (Laghetto), and this is said to be the origin of its name. The spot on which the chapel now stands was formerly a small lake. Upon its waters something brilliant was seen floating one evening. Boats were put out, and it was discovered to be an image of our dear Lady. A venerable priest received it with honor, and the whole neighborhood passed the night in singing the litany and hymns before the Image.

In the morning, they were astonished to see the lake dried up. Such has been the constant tradition. In the center of the ground were discovered the ruins of an ancient chapel, which was immediately restored. Many miracles are recorded to have taken place in this chapel.

It was here, then, that the poor widow sought relief in her deep distress. She passed nine days on the spot praying, without ceasing, for the prisoner's return. After the novena, she went home, full of hope, as to the result. As she approached her cot, her fond eyes quickly discerned a figure, standing at the door. it was her son; he had escaped on the day she had commenced her novena, and had arrived at his mother's house on the day of its conclusion