

# Reflections

## International Catholic Family Newsletter

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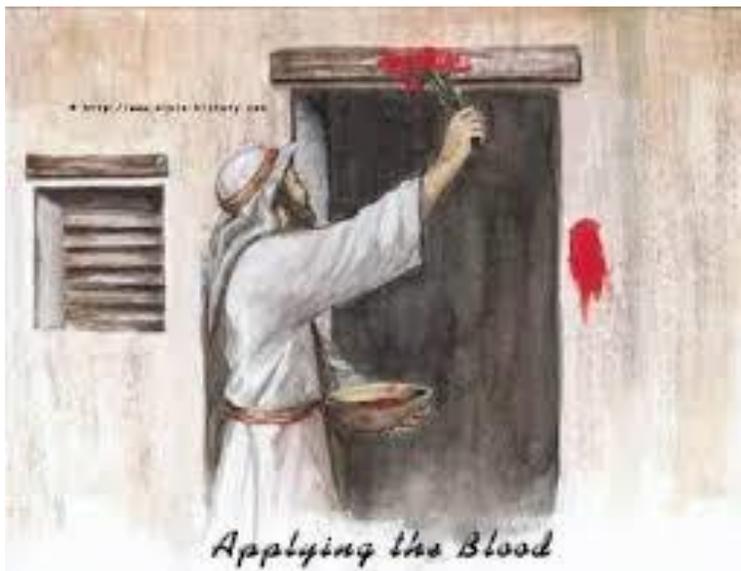
### What Is My Purpose in Life?

**Our Lady Sent Us A Message From Ecuador 400 Years Ago**

**The Miracle of the Statue of Our Lady of Good Success**

**Passover 1451 BC - Deliverance**

**Passover 2020 AD -Virus Deliverance**



### **Blessings to All:**

By: Richard Pickard

Peace be with you.

What is my Purpose in Life? To some extent, that depends on what you believe how life was created. Did life come about by accident or do you believe that God created us? Some people believe life was created by the accidental combination of atoms that always existed... into life as we know it. No need then, for God in creation. That does not mean they are not good people. Most are good, even

though God is not a part of their lives. Atheism also, doesn't guarantee good behavior anymore than religion does. I think the words of Katharine Hepburn, a great American actress sums up atheism for most people...*"I'm an atheist and that's it. I believe there's nothing we can know except that we should be kind to each other and do what we can for other people."*

For those who believe in a Creator, the words in John's gospel ring true. John 1:3-4 **"All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race."**

For Christians we believe that God created us for a **purpose**. *Many of us Christians, spend our entire lives trying to find what our purpose is!* What is my purpose? Did Jesus say what each person's purpose was? How do we find out?

For Jesus, His purpose on earth was to be born a human; preach salvation; cure the sick; raise the dead; and open Heaven through His suffering and death on the cross. His resurrection continues his purpose by defeating death and offers us hope through His love for us and the promise of eternal happiness in heaven.



*For many of us... searching for a satisfactory answer for the purpose in life, is one of the deepest human longings. Many a famous person has reached the top of their careers and declared the success to be meaningless. There is a deeper longing and awareness...that we are missing something in our life!*

Our true purpose has been clouded by original sin. We had fallen from God's grace because we wanted freedom from God. Freedom to disobey and to live our lives as gods. Whatever caused our first parents to want to be more than they were created for, is a mystery. The bible states that "they ate the **forbidden fruit**," to know good from evil.



We lost our way. God still loves us, and He needs to emphasize our purpose through the teachings and examples of Jesus Christ. God, through the Holy Spirit, conceived Jesus in the womb of Mary. He *became one of us* as the new Adam and the blessed **first fruit** of the virgin Mary... the new Eve.



We see the Holy Spirit confirming this in the words of Elizabeth upon hearing Mary's greeting. *"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, Most blessed are you among women, and **blessed is the fruit of your womb**"* Luke 1:41-42.

For Mary, her purpose was to be the mother of Jesus. She also became the ***Mother of the Body of Christ, which is the Church.***

**Your purpose is... for this time in the history of the world and Church.**

There is greater evil throughout the world than ever before. The laws have been changed to kill babies in the womb and to use the lies of Satan to say, 'they are not human beings.' We see an ever greater evil now arising, by the harvesting of body parts from aborted babies. We cry out to Mary to crush Satan's head. *Your Christian purpose is be an example to all that is good. That you are a follower of Christ. To pray for an end to abortion and to pray for your family.*

Perhaps your primary purpose is to be a wife, mother, husband, father, deacon, priest, Pope, doctor, lawyer, writer, lecturer, Eucharistic Minister of Holy Communion, etc. All of these things are good and are examples of holy lifestyles, when Christ is at the center of your calling.

But, if you still don't feel like you know what your purpose is, then ask Jesus to lead you. We cannot all be a Mother Teresa or a Padre Pio. We are all special to God. And no matter what you do, ***if you do with love***, then you are completing your purpose.

It's never too late to find your purpose, no matter how old you are! One young man tried to commit suicide because he did not have a purpose in his life. His conversion story and finding his purpose in life, changed the lives of millions. His name was Ravi Zacharias.



Ravi grew up in a nominal Anglican household, and says that he was an atheist until the age of 17 when he tried to commit suicide by swallowing poison.

While in the hospital, a local Christian worker brought him a Bible and told his mother to read to him from John 14. Zacharias says that it was John 14:19 that touched him and meant to him as the defining paradigm: ***"Because I live, you also will live."*** He said that he thought, "This may be my only hope: A new way of living. Life as defined by the Author of Life." and that he committed his life to Christ praying, *"Jesus if You are the one who gives life as it is meant to be, I want it. Please get me out of this hospital bed well, and I promise I will leave no stone unturned in my pursuit of truth."*

For over 50 years Ravi has travelled the world and shared the gospel in clarity and wisdom as few have ever done. God truly blessed him with speech and logic. Ravi found his purpose in life from his suicide death bed.

Ravi died in May of this year. But his worldwide ministry lives on. Those who knew him well, will remember him first for his kindness, gentleness, and generosity of spirit. The love and kindness he had come to know in and through Jesus Christ was the same love he wanted to share with all he met.

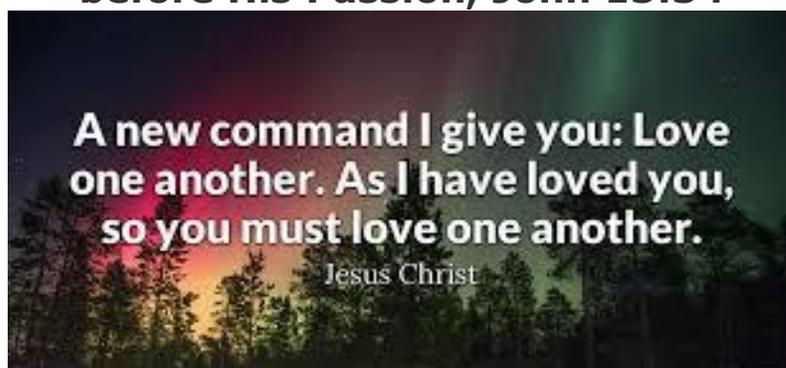
Ravi' purpose was based upon love of Jesus and love of others.

Whatever your purpose is...do with Love.



Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."

Perhaps your purpose can be summed up by Jesus, shortly before His Passion, John 13:34



## What Does Love One Another Mean?

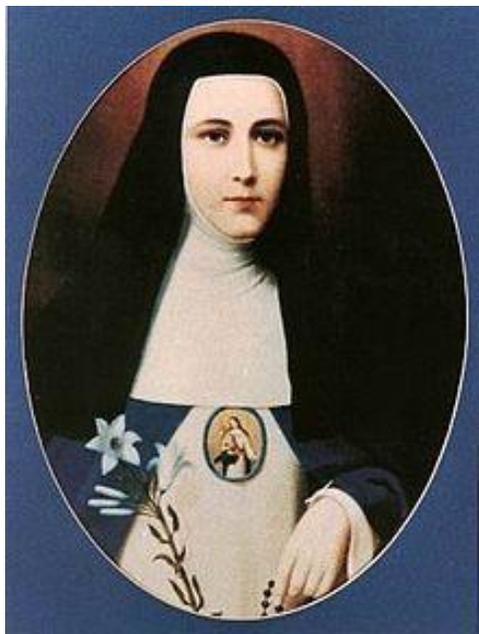
Love is patient, Love is kind. Love is not boastful or envious or arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." *St. Paul, First Letter to the Corinthians Chapter 13 verses 4-7.*

***This is a purpose we can all have. Love One Another...***

## ***Our Lady of Good Success*** **(Prophecies for Our Times)**

### **Prophetic revelations made to Venerable Mother Mariana de Jesus Torres**

This article is based on excerpts taken from the 18th Century manuscript entitled *The Admirable Life of Mother Mariana of Jesus Torres*, written by Prior Manuel de Souza Pereira, Franciscan Provincial in Quito, Ecuador, and director of the Convent Mother Mariana founded. This manuscript was written a century after her death. Mother Mariana is linked mysteriously to our times by the visions Our Lady showed her of the 20th Century over 350 years ago. **This apparition has been approved by the Church and Mother Mariana has been declared a Saint.**



On January 16, 1635, surrounded by her community and her Franciscan confessors, Mother Mariana made a solemn profession of Faith, and then asked, as a last favor, to die on the ground, in imitation of her Seraphic Father, St. Francis. After receiving Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Extreme Unction, she foretold the exact hour of her death: 3 p.m. Just before she died, she read her last will and testament, a moving testimony that gave her daughters inestimable advice about the religious life along with many prophecies concerning the order.

At its end, she turned to the priests and sisters: *"My fathers and sisters, the time has come for me to depart; recommend my soul to God with the appropriate prayers. I thank you for everything. Always, I beseech you, have this convent and your sisters in your care. I die, as I was born, joyously and peacefully in the arms of my mother, the Seraphic Order."* Two tears rolled down her cheek, she sighed, and with an angelic smile, that blessed soul left her body.



She is the patron saint of Ecuador and venerated at the La Iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús (The Church of Society of Jesus) in Quito. Her feast day is May 26.

After death, her body remained flexible, her complexion rosy, and the charming smile on her face gave her every appearance of being alive. During the wake, the sight of a blind girl was restored when a flower from the crown that encircled Mother Mariana's head was touched to her eyes.



In 1906, during the remodeling of the Convent, her three-century old tomb was opened. They discovered the body of Mother Mariana de Jesus whole and incorrupt, complete with her habit and the articles of penance that had been placed in the tomb with her. An exquisite aroma of lilies emanated

from her whole body. Thus, God preserves some of his saints who practice heroic virtue and maintain holy chastity in their earthly lives.

Mother Mariana possessed the gift of discernment of spirits, which Our Dear Lord so often gives to founders of religious orders. Since she could read the hearts of her daughters, she would comfort them, telling them how to progress in the spiritual life and explain how it was necessary to die to oneself in order to practice

real virtue. She repeatedly warned them to guard the common life of the Convent and obey the Rule. When prayer and community life are wanting, she said, everything falls short, for the religious without prayer is like a soldier without arms in combat. She told them to be patient in their sicknesses, since illnesses are the best and most meritorious penances, which free souls from illusions, vanity, and pride. She especially warned her daughters to guard against that "cursed human respect, which makes one ask: '*What will others say about this?*'" Instead, she counseled that they should guide their lives in the cloisters according to the norms of the Gospel and ground themselves firmly on the strong foundation of humility.

Let us consider some of the revelations that Mother Mariana was blessed to receive from Our Lord and Our Lady.

### **Instructions and Advice From Our Lady of Good Success**



**Our Lady:** *"Oh, if only human beings and religious knew what Heaven is and what it is to possess God, how differently they would live, sparing no sacrifice in order to enter more fully into possession of it! But some let themselves be dazzled by the false glamour of honors and human greatness while others are*

*blinded by self-love, not realizing that they are falling into lukewarmness, that immense evil which in religious houses destroys their fervor, humility, self-renunciation and the ceaseless practice of religious virtues and fraternal charity and that child-like simplicity which makes souls so dear to my Divine Son and to me, their Mother.*

*"Remember the words of the Royal Prophet: 'How marvelous are the works of the Lord!' Be convinced of this truth; teach and impress your daughters both living and those to come that they should love their divine vocations. Reveal to them the glorious place that God and I are saving for those who belong to Us, our heirs.*

*"Woe to the world should it lack monasteries and convents! Men do not comprehend their importance, for, if they understood, they would do all in their power to multiply them, because in them can be found the remedy for all physical and moral evils... No one on the face of the earth is aware whence comes the*



*salvation of souls, the conversion of great sinners, the end of great scourges, the fertility of the land, the end of pestilence and wars, and the harmony between nations. All this is due to the prayers that rise up from monasteries and convents.*

*"O, if mortals only understood how to appreciate the time given to them and would take advantage of each moment of their lives, how different the world would be! And a considerable number of souls would not fall to their eternal perdition! But this contempt is the fundamental cause for their downfall!"*



Our Lady emphasized the importance of the Sacrament of Penance and the important role of priests: "See and contemplate the grandeur of this restoring and life-giving Sacrament of Penance, so forgotten and even scorned by ungrateful men, who in their foolish madness, do not realize that it is the

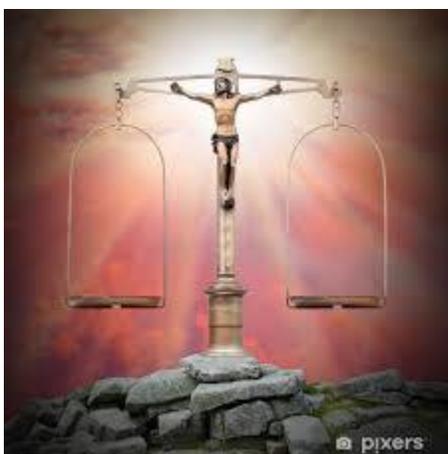
only sure means of salvation after one has lost his baptismal innocence.

What is most grievous is that even the ministers of My Most Holy Son do not give to it the value that they should, viewing with cold indifference this valuable and precious treasure, which has been placed in their hands for the restoration of souls redeemed by the Blood of the Redeemer.

There are those who consider hearing confession as a loss of time and a futile thing. O, alas! If priests were given to see directly that which you are now contemplating and were enlightened with the Light that now illuminates you, they would then recognize this gift!"

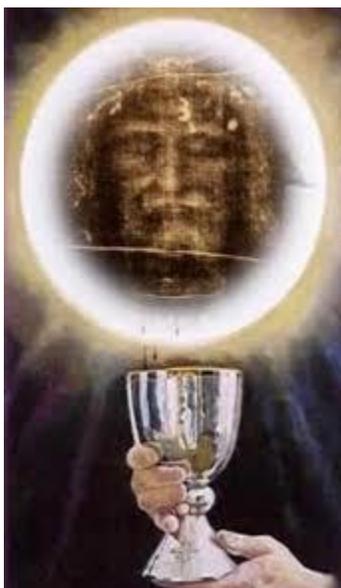


**Our Lord: "For in all times I have need of valiant souls to save My Church and the prevaricating world."** Our Lord also made Mother Mariana understand more clearly than ever before that devotion to the *Passion*, to the *Blessed Sacrament* and to *Our Lady* constitutes the support and mainstay of religious communities.



**"Know, moreover, that Divine Justice releases terrible chastisements on entire nations, not only for the sins of the people, but for those of priests and religious persons. For the latter are called, by the perfection of their state, to be the salt of the earth, the masters of truth, and the deflectors of Divine Wrath. Straying from their divine mission, they degrade themselves in such a way that, before the eyes of God they quicken the rigor of the punishments..."** (During the 41 years of St. John Vianney's ministry at Ars, France, no damage was ever done by storms.)

He also assured Mother Mariana that He was greatly pleased by those souls who take upon themselves the sublime task of suffering for the sanctification of the Clergy by means of their prayers, sacrifices and penances, and promised such souls a special glory in Heaven.



The ingratitude and betrayal of religious souls, so dear to His Heart, would compel Him **"to let My Justice fall upon My beloved cloisters – and even over cities – when those so near to Me who belong to Me reject My spirit, abandoning Me alone in Tabernacles, rarely remembering that I live there especially for love of them, even more than for the rest of the faithful."**

Imprudent admissions and internal abuses permitted by superiors are the ruin of communities. **"Such communities can only be preserved – while they exist – at the cost of much penance, humiliations and daily and solid practice of the religious who are good. Woe to these corrupt members during those times of calamity! Weep for them, beloved spouse, and implore that the time of so much suffering will be shortened."**

He warned her that the Chastisement would be severe for those religious who squandered the many graces with their pride and vainglory to secure positions of power and rank and He especially condemned the lukewarm religious.



Mother Mariana saw that the greatest interior torments of the Sacred Heart were the ingratitude and indifference of those souls who, chosen among millions to be His spouses and ministers, left Him in the most absolute solitude.

And this despite the fact that in the Holy Sacrament, He would live under the same roof with His spouses and come into the hand of His priests at the simple call of their voices at the most solemn moment of the Consecration.

## Prophecies for Ecuador & the World

**Our Lady** prophesied that at the end of the 19th Century and especially in the 20th Century that Satan would reign almost completely by the means of the <sup>1</sup>Diabolical sect (Masonic sect) . The Queen of Heaven told Mother Mariana that this battle would reach its most acute stage because of various unfaithful religious, who, *"under the appearance of virtue and bad-spirited zeal, would turn upon Religion, who nourished them at her breast."*

*"During this time," she continued, "insomuch as this poor country will lack the Christian spirit, the Sacrament of Extreme Unction will be little esteemed. Many people will die without receiving it – either because of the negligence of their families or their false sentimentality that tries to protect the sick from seeing the gravity of their situations, or because they will rebel against the spirit of the Catholic Church, impelled by the malice of the devil. Thus, many souls will be deprived of innumerable graces, consolations and the strength they need to make that great leap from time to eternity..."*

*"As for the Sacrament of Matrimony, which symbolizes the union of Christ with His Church, it will be attacked and profaned in the fullest sense of the word. Diabolical sect (Masonic sect), which will then be in power, will enact iniquitous laws with the objective of doing away with this Sacrament, making it easy for everyone to live in sin, encouraging the procreation of illegitimate children born without the blessing of the Church. The Christian spirit will rapidly decay, extinguishing the precious light of Faith until it reaches the point that there will be an almost total and general corruption of customs. The effects of secular education will increase, which will be one reason for the **lack of priestly and religious vocations...**"*

*"The Sacred Sacrament of Holy Orders will be ridiculed, oppressed and despised. ...The demon will try to persecute the Ministers of the Lord in every possible way and he will labor with cruel and subtle astuteness to deviate them from the spirit of their vocation, corrupting many of them. These corrupted priests,*

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<sup>1</sup> Masonic and Diabolical Sect were interchangeably used, in the Spanish writing given to the messages by Fr. Pereira

*who will scandalize the Christian people, will incite the hatred of the bad Christians and the enemies of the Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church to fall upon all priests. This apparent triumph of Satan will bring enormous sufferings to the good Pastors of the Church...."*

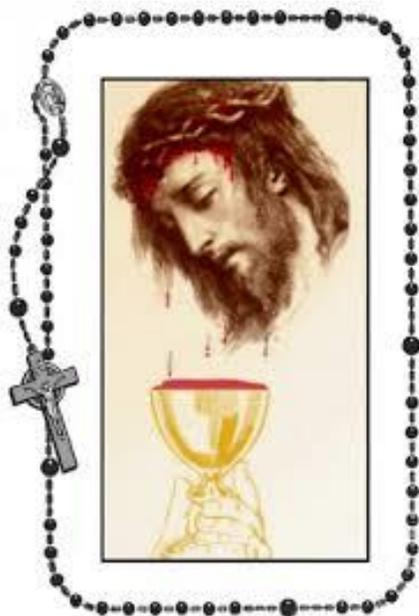
*"Moreover, in these unhappy times, there will be unbridled luxury which, acting thus to snare the rest into sin, will conquer innumerable frivolous souls who will be lost. Innocence will almost no longer be found in children, **nor modesty in women**. In this supreme moment of need of the Church, those who should speak will fall silent."*

*"But know, beloved daughter, that when your name is made known in the 20th century, there will be many who will not believe, claiming that this devotion is not pleasing to God...A simple humble faith in the truth of My apparitions to you, My predilect child, will be reserved for humble and fervent souls docile to the inspirations of grace, for Our Heavenly Father communicates His secrets to the simple of heart, and not to those whose hearts are inflated with pride, pretending to know what they do not, or self-satisfied with empty knowledge."*



*During this time, Our Lady foretold, "the secular Clergy will leave much to be desired because priests will become careless in their sacred duties. Lacking the divine compass, they will stray from the road traced by God for the priestly ministry, and they will become attached to wealth and riches, which they will unduly strive to obtain. How the Church will suffer during this dark night! Lacking a*

*Prelate and Father to guide them with paternal love, gentleness, strength, wisdom and prudence, many priests will lose their spirit, placing their souls in great danger. This will mark the arrival of My hour."*



*"Therefore, clamor insistently without tiring and weep with bitter tears in the privacy of your heart, imploring our Celestial Father that, for love of the Eucharistic Heart of my Most Holy Son and His Precious Blood shed with such generosity and the profound bitterness and sufferings of His cruel Passion and Death, He might take pity on His ministers and bring to an end those Ominous times, sending to this Church the Prelate who will restore the spirit of its priests."*

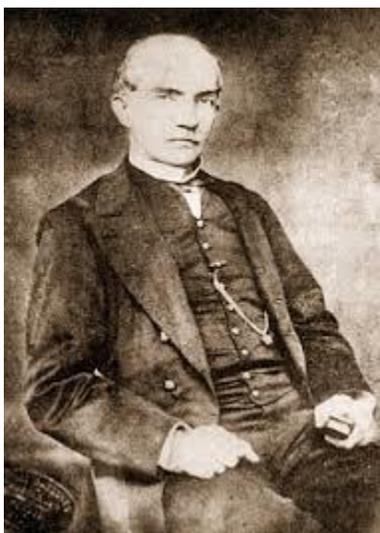


On December 8, 1634, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, three archangels and their Queen appeared to Mother Mariana. St. Gabriel was carrying a Ciborium filled with Hosts which Our Lady explained: *"This signifies the Most August Sacrament of the Eucharist, which will be distributed by my Catholic priests to faithful Christians belonging to the Holy Roman, Catholic and Apostolic Church, whose visible head is the Pope, the King of Christianity. His pontifical infallibility will be declared a dogma of the Faith by the same Pope chosen to proclaim the dogma of the Mystery of My Immaculate Conception. He will be persecuted and imprisoned in the Vatican by the unjust usurpation of the Pontifical States through the iniquity, envy and avarice of an earthly monarch."*



This holy Pope was Blessed Pius IX, who fulfilled every prediction made by Our Lady. His body, being exhumed for beatification in 2000, was found miraculously preserved in the tomb where it had lain for more than a century. His face still showed a striking serenity in death.

Another most interesting prophecy of Our Lady: *"In the 19th Century there will be a truly Catholic president (in Ecuador), a man of character whom God Our Lord will give the palm of martyrdom on the square adjoining this Convent. He will consecrate the Republic to the Sacred Heart of My Most Holy Son, and this consecration will sustain the Catholic Religion in the years that will follow, which will be ill-fated ones for the Church. These years, during which the evil sect of Diabolical sect (Masonic sect) will take control of the civil government - will see a cruel persecution of all religious communities, and they will also strike out violently against this one of mine."*



The "truly Catholic" president of Ecuador, Gabriel Garcia Moreno (1821-1875), consecrated the republic to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1873. Pope Pius IX paid him tribute as a man who had died *"the death of a martyr...a victim to his Faith and Christian charity."*

Gabriel Moreno's incorrupt heart and the famous painting of Our Lady of Quito can be seen in the Cathedral of Quito.

## Conclusion

We are living in a time of the great crisis of Faith and morals as prophesied by Our Lady. The confusion is of such magnitude that it is not only subverting the temporal sphere, but also penetrates the walls of the Church itself. Indeed, as Our Lady prophesied, the corruption of customs has become general and the precious light of Faith almost extinct.

Yet the message of Our Lady of Good Success ends with a note of great hope: When everything will seem lost and paralyzed, that will be *"the happy beginning of the complete restoration. This will mark the arrival of my hour, when I, in a marvelous way, will dethrone the proud and cursed Satan, trampling him under my*



*feet and fettering him in the infernal abyss."* It is the promise echoed by Our Lady again at Fatima in 1917: **"In the end, My Immaculate Heart will triumph."**

## The Miracle of the Statue of Our Lady of Good Success

On July 5, 1941, Peru invaded the borders of Ecuador – the western Province of El Oro and the Andean Province of Loja. Fierce fighting broke out, and Ecuador was facing superior forces and entering what appeared to be a long and bloody war. By mid-July, many lives had been lost and it seemed there would be no immediate end to what today is called the War of '41.

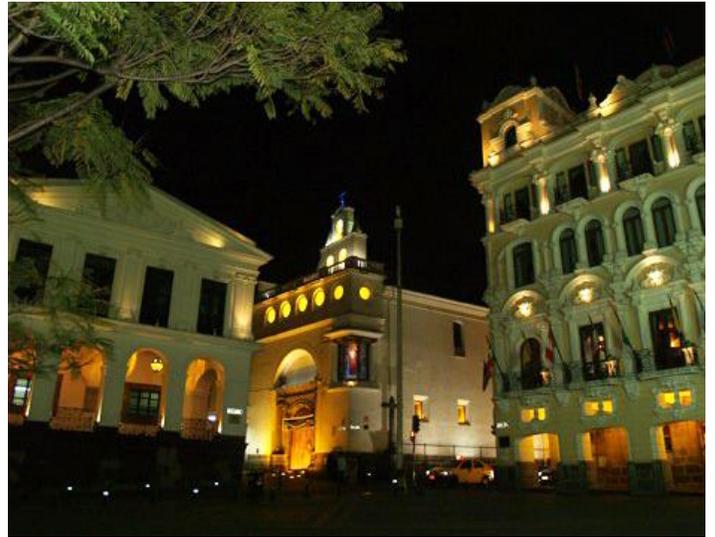
In a plea to Heaven – since there seemed to be no recourse on earth – the Archbishop of Quito, Carlos María Javier de la Torre, ordered that a *Triduum* of prayers be said in all the churches of Quito addressing the Blessed Virgin to implore her intercession before God to end the hostilities.

On July 24, the *Triduum* in honor of Our Lady of Good Success started in the Church of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Quito, across from the Government's Palace. The life-size miraculous statue of Our Lady of Good Success, which usually sits in the Abbess' seat in the upper choir, was brought down to reign above the main altar so that the faithful could join the cloistered Conceptionist nuns in asking her intercession.

On July 27, as the *Triduum* was coming to its close, Our Lady of Good Success worked a miracle for the Ecuadorian people, offering a great hope to a distressed population, a hope that was very quickly fulfilled.

### **Our Lady lowers & raises her eyes**

It was around 9 a.m., various ladies were near the main altar praying to Our Lady when they observed that the Statue of the Virgin of Good Success opened her eyes wide, turned them downward at them with a look of great compassion and, then, raised them upward. This happened several times. Visibly moved by the miraculous event, they remained in prayer, several of them weeping, but they did not tell the others present in the church what they had witnessed.



The Conceptionist Church, center, next to the Government Palace in the main square of old Quito



At around 10 a.m., Fr. Benjamin Rafael Ayora y Cueva, the Chaplain of the Conceptionist Covent and a Canon of Theology in Loja, arrived to vest for Mass. Fr. Cueva, who had a deep devotion to Our Lady of Good Success, went first to the altar to recommend himself to the Virgin, before the Mass. As he turned toward her Statue, he witnessed the same miracle.

Deeply moved but fearful that he was experiencing some optical illusion, he went to tell the ladies who were praying so fervently in the church what he had witnessed. They confirmed his experience; they told him that they had seen the same miracle only about an hour earlier.

The news rapidly spread through the whole city. One person told another, "A miracle at the Church of the Conception!" "Hurry, Our Lady is moving her eyes at the Conceptionist Church!"

In a short time, it seemed that all the inhabitants of Quito, a city known for its piety and devotion to Our Lady, were heading toward the Conceptionist Church with the hope to see for themselves the miracle, as the Statue continued to raise and lower her eyes at intervals throughout the day.

Learning of the prodigy, a reporter from the Quito daily *El Comercio* hurried to the crowded square to interview witnesses of the marvel. He spoke with the distinguished Señora Matilde Chiriboga de Salvador, who told him with great excitement: "I saw the Blessed Virgin open and close her eyes, just as thousands of persons have seen it today."

Señor Hugo Argüello Yépes heard about the miracle from a friend and immediately went to the Conceptionist Church. Breaking through the enormous crowd, he made his way to the foot of the altar. He stated that he contemplated the Statue for a space of 10 minutes and, along with many others who filled the Church, also witnessed the Statue moving her eyes.

Many witnesses said that the face of the image would take on a rosy color. Then, her eyelids, which are normally half-closed, would open wider and she would turn her gaze downward on the people. Afterwards, she would raise them to Heaven and, then, lower them to their natural position. Throughout the miracle, the Statue was permeated with a supernatural light, glowing with a heavenly aura.

Almost all the persons who came to view the Statue – some believers, others not – saw the miraculous statue of the Virgin raise and lower her eyes.

There were some few, however, who said that they could not see anything, notwithstanding their religious predisposition, even though all those around them – men, ladies and children – were witnessing the marvel.

For example, there was the curious case of two university students, one a devout Catholic youth and the other a socialist, who entered the church out of curiosity over the event that everyone was talking about. The Catholic saw nothing, while the socialist saw the miracle. Filled with emotion, he fell to his knees, his face bathed in tears.



Many said that the Statue took on a rosy hue, illuminated with a heavenly light



On Our Lady's Feast day of February 2, the people of Quito fill the Church to honor her

When the bell tolled for the 7 p.m. evening Mass and final prayers of the *Triduum*, several thousand of the faithful were milling about in front of the church trying to enter in order to verify for themselves whether the Virgin of Good Success was moving her eyelids. The police were called to keep order and prevent the impatient people from damaging the doors of the Conceptionist church.

This marvelous maternal sign of Our Lady's concern for her people continued through the evening and night, only ending at around 3 in the morning of the next day. Thousands of persons witnessed the miracle.

Clearly, Our Lady had interceded for the Ecuador people, for on that day, Monday, July 28, it was reported that a ceasefire had been called. The war was over. On July 29, Peru and Ecuador signed the Rio Protocol and the Peruvian forces withdrew from Ecuadorian soil. There was no doubt in the minds of the faithful that this prodigious event was a sign that the Mother of God had heard their prayers and come to their aid in that time of dire distress.

In these times of the great upheaval with wars, and rumors of wars; pandemics; and where evil is good; and good is evil...Take your Rosary in hand. You are a warrior in Our Lady's Army. Live a Christian life and be an example to your children and to all you meet. Your heavenly Mother is by your side. Pray, Pray, Pray.

## **The International Catholic Family Newsletter Is Published Monthly**

**Our mission statement is to motivate people to pray and to be Christian examples in their work, home and with others, for those needing the Light in a world of Darkness.**

**<https://www.catholicfamilynewsletter.com>**

**I am watching over you. Pray my children,  
Pray, Pray, Pray My Rosary For The Salvation of Sinners**

