

It was on February 2, 1594 that the Blessed Virgin appeared for the first time to the young abbess.

Mother Mariana, with her forehead on the ground, with tears and sighs, pleaded with the Divine Majesty for the many evils afflicting that flourishing Christianity and her convent.

She heard then a heavenly voice calling her by her name. She saw Our Lady before her, shining in the midst of immense clarity. She had the Baby Jesus in her left arm, and a golden staff in her right hand.

- *"I am Mary of the Good Success, Queen of Heaven and Earth,"* said the Mother of God. *"Your prayers, tears and penances are very pleasing to our heavenly Father [...] Now I want you to strain your heart and not let suffering bring you down: your life will be long for the glory of God and of your Mother who speaks to you. My Most Holy Son gives you pain in all its forms; and, to infuse the courage you need, take my arms in yours."*

Upon receiving the Child Jesus in her arms, she felt the greatest desire to suffer and to consume herself as a victim to placate Divine Justice, if possible, until the end of the world.

In the second apparition, on January 16, 1599, the Blessed Virgin made her aware of various future events. When saying goodbye to Mother Mariana de Jesus, Our Lady said:

"It is the will of my Most Holy Son that you yourself send for a statue of me to be sculpted, as you see me and place it on top of the Chair of the Prelate, from there to govern my monastery [...] so that mortals understand that I am powerful to appease the Divine Justice, achieve mercy and forgiveness to every sinful soul that comes to me with a contrite heart, because I am the Mother of Mercy and in me there is nothing but goodness and love".

In the following years, the religious suffered a terrible ordeal. Not until on February 5, 1610, was the sculptor designated by Our Lady able to be hired.

Don Francisco de la Cruz del Castillo, a Spaniard of noble lineage, lived in Quito with his wife and three children. He received the commission of his Queen as a gift from Heaven. Almost a year later he pointed out that the image was practically ready and that there were hardly any small alterations in the painting, for which he was to procure the best dyes. On January 16, 1611 he returned to the convent with the desire to conclude his work, but ...

Saint Francis of Assisi and the three archangels conclude the image

In the early morning of that day, when the nuns went to the choir to pray the office, they found her illuminated by a supernatural light and heard angelic voices singing the *Salve Sancta Parens*.

From the still unfinished image came vivid rays. The base paint applied by Del Castillo fell to the ground along with fragments of wood, the tracings of the image became softer and its physiognomy more celestial. But only Mother Mariana saw how, at the request of Saint Francis, the three archangels -Miguel, Gabriel and Rafael- completed the work *"while the Queen of angels and men approached the image and entered it, as the sun rays penetrate through beautiful crystals. At that moment the sacred image came to life and sang with magnificent harmony the Magnificat"*.