Apparition of the Virgin Mary in QUILLACOLLO

BOLIVIA, 1700

he Virgin of Urkupita is an image of Mary of the Assumption, who was venerated on the 15th of August in the city of Quillacollo, capital city of the province located 13.85 kilometers from the city of Cochabamba in Bolivia. History narrates that toward the end of the year 1700, in the region of Urkupita, a humble family of peasants who earned a living thanks to a small herd of goats entrusted to the care of their youngest daughter. The girl went each day to the lower hills of the area, crossing the Sajama river, where water and grasses were found in abundance to nourish her flock. On a beautiful day of August, while the sun was making strange gashes of light with the beams of the little hill and the meadows sparkled the color emerald, a Lady holding a beautiful child in her arms appeared to her. From that day, the young shepherdess began to play often with that Child in the waters of a spring that pushed forth from the rocks. She began to return later and later to her parents’ but. Having become suspicious, they asked the reason for her tardiness and the young girl told them about her encounter with a Lady that she called “The maesa and her baby.” She said that the maesa and her child would come down to play with her in the chiqui, a site with chiqui pila, names with which still today are recognized as the two sources of fresh water found at the foot of the hill. One day, upon the insistence of the young shepherd girl, the parents ascended the hill and they too were able to see a celestial image that vanished in the underbrush among the cacti, the cactus, and the little birds of prey. Immediately they went in search of the道士es (at that time, parishes were called道士es, therefore the priest was called道士s) and some of the local neighbors who, already informed of the events, had the girl lead them to the apparition site in order to ascertain the matter for themselves. In the meantime, the Virgin raised herself up and got on top of the hill of the mountain. Then the girl, indicating with her finger, began to shout in the Quichua language: “Uxyuy, uyuy, uyuy,” which means “Already she is up there on the hill, she is there on the hill!” From this derives the name Urkupita as adapted into Spanish. Then the Blessed Mother, having arrived on the top of the mountain, vanished. Meanwhile, in the field where the Virgin Mary had appeared, a beautiful statue was discovered of a Lady with Child that was named “the Virgin Mary of Urkupita,” and it was carried in procession. Over time, seeing the miracles that occurred, in that same spot the people built a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin of Urkupita. Afterward, the miraculous image was transferred to the shrine of San Isidro in Quillacollo, which is an annual pilgrimage destination for many coming from all over Bolivia and from the rest of South America.