



**THE APPEALS  
OF OUR LADY**  
APPARITIONS  
AND  
MARIAN SHRINES  
IN THE WORLD

# Apparition of the Virgin Mary at QUINCHE



ECUADOR, 1586

**I**n 1586, a woodcarver named Diego de Robles carved in wood a statue of Our Lady from a native cedar, for the recently converted Carib Indians. Since they did not appreciate his work, he carried with him the statue to Ecuador, where lived another tribe of Indians, also recently converted and baptized. These people immediately saw the beauty that the statue emanated and they bartered it with some timber. Since they did not have a chapel, they placed the small statue in a niche carved into the rock, near their place of work. During the day, the Indians noted the little birds were fond of the statue and hovered around it chirping their prayers. As a continuation of the concert sung by the birds, the Indians took the habit of assembling in the evening in front of the Virgin Mary, to sing and play melodies for her, with their rudimentary instruments. As an apparent sign of approval, during these exhibitions the statue was often surrounded by a bright light. The women of the village wove a dress for their beloved statue and it was precisely in touching this garment that many healings took place. In fact they were so numerous to reach the ears of the Indians of the nearby tribes who began to arrive in pilgrimage to the miraculous statue. Over time a small chapel was built to place it in, and once again, the carver Robles became part of the story of the statue. He was asked to use his craft to build a pedestal for the statue. Apparently the sculptor showed little interest for this new task and often presented excuses for not starting the work, at least until when, one day, he headed to Quito on the saddle of his horse. During the trip, the horse tripped on a bridge in the jungle that was crossing a rushing river and threw him beyond the edge of the bridge. It is told that the spur of Robles remained entangled in the rope of the bridge, thus saving his life, but leaving him dangling hung by his foot. Without doubt he must have made devout promises to the Lady of Quinche because, as soon as he was brought to safety, he began to plan and build the commissioned pedestal. There are many miracles attributed to Our Lady of Quinche but one of the first ones aroused the greatest interest and drew countless pilgrims to the wooden Shrine. A young couple was fervently praying invoking the protection for their little boy. The couple had left the child asleep in the shade of a tree while they were helping in the construction of the chapel. Hearing their boy scream, the parents ran and saw a large bear that was carrying him away. Eventually they found the child dead, his small body brutally mauled. Crying and despairing for their loss, the parents carried the boy to the statue of Our Lady where they were joined by all those who had witnessed the aggression. While they were devoutly praying for their acceptance and consolation, the child opened his eyes and extended his arms towards the statue. All those present praised for the miraculous healing of Our Lady of Quinche. Over the years Our Lady performed numerous miracles for her beloved Indians and for the people of Ecuador. Among them must be noted the fact that it never rained on the day when a procession was scheduled. Moreover, on many occasions Our Lady has protected Quinche from drought and epidemics. Affectionately known as "La Pequenita", "The Little Beloved One", the statue of the Virgin Mary with the Baby is kept in the great and magnificent Church of Our Lady of Quinche, arisen from the rudimentary wooden Shrine built by the Indians in the XVI Century.



Painting depicting the first baptisms performed by the missionaries in Ecuador



Painting illustrating the moment when the sculptor Robles, creator of the statue of the Virgin of Quinche, is miraculously rescued after having invoked the help of Our Lady



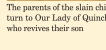
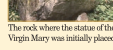
Painting illustrating the miracle of the bear: the animal kills the boy who will then be miraculously revived by Our Lady of Quinche



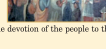
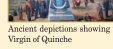
The Indians often saw a light coming from the statue of Our Lady



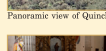
The parents of the slain child turn to Our Lady of Quinche who revives their son



The rocks where the statue of the Virgin Mary was initially placed



Ancient depictions showing the devotion of the people to the Virgin of Quinche



The miraculous statue of the Virgin of Quinche



The Shrine of the Virgin of Quinche



Interior of the Shrine



Votive offerings

Celebration in honor of the Virgin

Celebration in honor of the Virgin