

Roesch, after I had gazed on the picture, "Father, it is certain;" and he exclaimed, "What a prodigy!" Then the boys started to get up from their tables and to gather around where we were looking at the holy image; little by little I moved closer to the picture, where I could see her closing and opening her eyes for about a quarter of an hour or a little longer... I remained convinced that the eyes of the holy image of the Virgin were closing and opening during that time without ceasing. The boys were saying in one, loud voice: "Now she is closing them; now she is opening..." A great fear came upon the boys; I saw one by, who was close by, trembling.

"One boy insisted on calling the Father Rector, but Father Roesch would not allow it, because there was such a commotion"; therefore he clapped his hands to signal that it was time to go to the Chapel to recite the Rosary, even though the Virgin continued to close and open her eyes. The boy said to the Father: 'Let us carry the picture to the Chapel and pray the Rosary before her there;' but he would not allow it."

Typical of the testimonies of the boys is the following:

"I do not fear that I was mistaken, nor did I have a prejudice in favor of the prodigy; on the contrary, I believed it to be a joke of the little boys; but afterward, I stood at a distance of one or two meters and saw perfectly that the image opened and closed her eyes, but more so the left; and when they were closed the whites of her eyes were completely concealed."

#### THE CHURCH INVESTIGATES

Seven days after the event a Canonical process was begun by the Church authorities. It mandated the appearance of a Theological Commission expressly named for this case, and of a Commission of scientists and doctors. They all submitted their findings after mature examination according to their proper expertise. Finally, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of May 1906, the people of Quito heard the conclusions of the Church authorities:

**The event of April, 1906, at the College of the Jesuit Fathers is established as historically certain.**

**This event, in the circumstances in which it occurred, cannot be explained by natural laws.**

**This event, on account of its antecedents and consequences, cannot be attributed to diabolical influence.**

Devotion to the Sorrowful Virgin quickly spread across the national boundaries and was established in Columbia, Peru, and Venezuela; it jumped to Bolivia and Chile; then to Spain, England, France, the United States and Australia.

Ever since 1906, the miracle has been commemorated every year with a solemn and fervent novena, at which crowds of the faithful assist.

\*(excerpted from: [www.salvemariaregina.info](http://www.salvemariaregina.info))

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## Miracle of the Sorrowful Virgin of Quito, Ecuador 1906



...little by little the Sorrowful Virgin  
opened and closed her eyes  
with love and tenderness -  
to indicate that she is ready to receive all

## *Miracle of the Sorrowful Virgin of Quito*

\*The image of the Sorrowful Virgin of Quito, with her Heart pierced by the seven swords of her Seven Sorrows, is one of the best-known images of our Mother of Sorrows in the Catholic world. What is not so well-known is the history of this image and of the miracle which made it so famous. This history is very much entwined with the history of Ecuador itself; for Quito is the capital of Ecuador.

### Historical Background

Ecuador was the first Spanish colony in the New World to rebel and gain independence from the Mother Country (in 1822). Catholics who fought for independence may have thought they had a just cause, but, as so often happens, eventually the revolutionary movement fell under the domination of anti-Catholic liberals. Ecuador's history has often been marred by revolutions and anti-Catholic governments. Thus, President José Urbina expelled the Jesuits from Ecuador in 1852.

Ten years later the truly Catholic President, Gabriel García Moreno, allowed the Jesuits to return, and gave them back their ancient church and college. In gratitude, the Jesuits renamed the college "St. Gabriel." It was the same President Moreno who solemnly consecrated Ecuador to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on March 25, 1874, with these words: "Prostrate before Thy Divine Presence, all the public powers of the Church and State offer and consecrate to Thee, now and for always, the Republic of Ecuador as Thy exclusive property and possession." Gabriel García Moreno paid for this consecration with his blood. He was assassinated by enraged liberals more than one year later, on August 6, 1875, as he was returning from First Friday adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral of Quito - the site of the consecration. Moreno had noted in his diary that morning: "Lord Jesus, show me what it is that I ought to do today for Thy love."

### THE MIRACLE

It was in 1906, when the persecution of the Church had reached its height, that the miracle of the Sorrowful Virgin took place. It was the 20th of April 1906, Friday of Easter Week; the 35 boarding students were dining in the refectory of the College of St. Gabriel. An image of the Mother of Sorrows hung on one side of the door, to the right as one enters, about six feet from the floor. The picture was an oleograph (a print using oil-based inks), printed in France, of about 20 inches long by 16 inches wide. The Jesuits had purchased three such pictures from a traveling salesman. The Prefect of Discipline, Father Andrés Roesch, testified as follows at the Canonical Process investigating the miracle:

"At 8:00 pm, when the students had finished their meal, I entered the refectory and, contrary to the established custom, and without explanation, I said "Deo Gratias" to the boys, to their great surprise (*this was a permission to converse, instead of continuing the spiritual reading*). At several of the tables, I spoke about the events in San Francisco, California (*the earthquake which had taken place two days earlier*). I did so with the boys at the first table (who had made their First Holy Communion on

Holy Thursday), in order to make reflections upon that event and to encourage conversation concerning the Most Holy Virgin. One of them, Jaime Chávez, raised his eyes toward a print of the Virgin of Sorrows, hanging on the wall about one and a half meters from him.

"With amazement he saw that the image closed her eyes; filled with fear, he covered his eyes with his hand and spoke of it to the boy next to him, Carlos Herrmann, who saw the same marvel. Because of this, they knelt down between the table and the bench and recited the Our Father and Hail Mary. Then they called to another boy and another, until one of them came to me and urged me with great insistence to go and see...

"At first I admonished the one who called me to be quiet, because it appeared to me to be an illusion of the boys; but finally, at the insistence and calls of all those who were present at the prodigy, I went over to the table situated closest to the image, with the determination of solving the mystery. I carefully made sure that the electric lamps were not flickering and that there was no reflection on the image: this did not appear to be the case.

"Standing in front of the image, I fixed my eyes upon her without blinking, and I saw that the Most Holy Virgin slowly closed her eyelids; but not believing that this was certain, I withdrew from that place. Seeing this, Brother Alberdi (*the Assistant Supervisor*), who was standing much closer than I had been, said to me wondering at what had happened: 'But Father, it is a miracle...if it is a miracle...' I returned again to the place where I was before; then I felt a chill come over my body as I saw, without the possibility of doubt, that the image definitely closed and opened her eyes. When this happened all the boys who were present cried with one voice: 'Now she's closing them; now she's opening them; now the left eye...' It should be noted that at times only the left eye closed, or at least did so with greater clarity than the right, and so appeared to be more closed.

"The event was repeated many times over the space of about fifteen minutes, more or less. It ceased when, seeing that we were already late for night prayers, and always fearing to give too much attention to this, I gave the order for the students to retire. Many of them did so reluctantly, since they wanted to kneel down right there and pray. I suppressed any noisy manifestations in order not to cause a disturbance, for it appeared to me that if the event were miraculous, there would not be lacking sufficient witnesses to prove it. In the beginning I believed it to be an illusion; but after I had seen it, I withdrew without giving credence to anything. At the insistence of Brother Alberdi, I returned and beheld the blinking with such clarity that it gave me a chill, and I remain convinced."

The testimony of Brother Alberdi is in full agreement:

"One of the boys from the first tables came and informed us about the Virgin... that she was moving her eyes; we received the news with unconcern or without any enthusiasm, at least speaking for myself. I don't know how to account for what happened to me then, but I remember that I said to Father