



Have recourse to her in all your spiritual and temporal needs. When your souls suffer temptations and are immersed in grief, and if the star of your vocation is hidden by Divine permission from the sight of your soul, turn to her with confidence and say, "Star of the stormy sea of my mortal life, may your light shine upon me so that I do not stray from the path that leads me to heaven."¹



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Our Lady of Good Success

Due to the present situation in the Church, devotion to Our Lady is crucial. Not only is it important for the life of our souls but also for the life of the Church, itself. In recent times, the Blessed Mother has visited us with instructions on how to conduct ourselves in order to get to heaven. As a result, we have recourse to her under a variety of titles.

However, one title especially brings to mind true and certain hope in these desperate times, times which have the ability to tempt the most conscientious of Catholics today to despair. Parents are battle-weary from fighting "demons" in all realms, and not just the spiritual. We struggle to protect our children from the evils of our culture, our schools, of the mass media, all sorts of "mainstream entertainment," and bad companions. Providers for our families are barely making ends meet with the roller coaster ride of the economy. Yes, we are being attacked on all levels of life to the very depth of our souls. We find ourselves exhausted, indifferent, or sometimes bordering on depression. It is clear that the enemies of our Faith, family, and country are gaining ground.

The quotation of Mother Mariana that introduced this article gives us hope. We have a weapon to fight these "principalities and powers" that is not of flesh and blood. That weapon is devotion to Our Lady, and, specifically for these times because of the prophecy attached to it, devotion to Our Lady of Good Success. Our Lady of Good Success prophesied that devotion to her under this title, so popular in the 1600's, would fall away but it would become resurgent in the 20th century, the era in which we would sorely need to "gird our loins" for battle.

The first official devotion to the Blessed Mother under this title originated in Spain in 1606. The focus of this article will be on the apparitions which inspired it—of Our Lady of Good Success in Quito, Ecuador—which began in 1594. Prophecy about the 20th century is the basis of these approved apparitions. One such prophecy was that the story of Our Lady of Good Success would not become renowned until the 20th century.

Devotion to Our Lady of Good Success began in 1606 when two Minim Brothers, Brothers Gabriel de Fontaned and Guillermo de Rigosa, discovered a

beautiful statue of the Blessed Mother and the Infant Jesus on their way to get approval from the Pope for a new order of religious they hoped to found. On their journey, a perilous storm arose in which these brothers felt certain that they were going to die. Praying with resignation to God and imploring safe haven in which to die happily, they found their prayers answered when they saw a strange light coming from a cave high up in a cliff. Hoping that this was an answer to their prayers, they climbed a steep mountainous path to reach this desolate place. What a surprise awaited them! Not only was this a safe place but also home to a magnificent shrine of the Mother of God. For in this forlorn place they discovered a beautiful statue of Mary and the Christ Child. Surrounding this grotto were flowers that exuded a perfume that was not of this world. Illuminating it was the light of a thousand shimmering lights. What a wonder to behold for these poor, exhausted friars! For their prayers, they found not only a place of shelter and their lives spared, but also they had found a beautiful statue in a place most unexpected.

No one was known to have made the statue or the beautiful sanctuary where it was found. So taking the statue they carried it to Rome. These two brothers hoped that the Blessed Mother would assist them to get the much needed approval of their new order. When the time came for the brothers to plead their case before the Holy Roman Pontiff Pope Paul V, they were extremely worried. They feared they would not get the consent they were seeking. However, to their great astonishment, on hearing the wonderful story of the discovery of the statue and realizing this was indeed a supernatural occurrence, the Pope knelt before the statue and placed his pectoral cross around her neck. The Holy Father asked to venerate the image. He exclaimed:

Look Brothers! She is smiling! Why does she smile so? What good success you have had on this journey! There is no doubt that Our Lady has deigned to protect and support you in your work. Therefore it will not be me that will go against her. May all of your desires have good success!²

He then blessed the statue and christened her "Our Lady of Good Success." He commanded that devotion to her should be propagated immediately. The friars and the statue made their way back to Spain where the statue was eventually taken to Madrid. There the image became renowned for its numerous miracles. Presently, the statue resides in the Church of *Buen Suceso* (Good Success) in Madrid. [This statue is the one pictured on the title page of this article.—Ed.]

How much of this story is applicable to our present day life? We are like those Minim Brothers who, becoming lost in a horrendous storm, fear for their lives just as we fear for our lives, spiritual and otherwise. We implore the good God to give us a safe haven to rest our weary souls, tired minds, and exhausted bodies. How many of us have begged for calm in the storm? Are we not now at that point where the Brothers stood begging for mercy? Perhaps soon we too will see the light in the cave far up in the cliffs. We must not despair, but climb this last stretch of the journey, the most perilous and dangerous part of our passage yet, so that we too may find Her at the end of the tempest waiting for us calm and serene and triumphant.

But this is only the beginning of one of the most captivating and charming stories of Our Lady....

On the other side of the globe, in a savage world of jungles and mountains, pagans and voodoo, a small group of religious sisters completed an arduous journey by ship from Spain to Ecuador to found the first convent in Quito, Ecuador, in 1577. There were five founding sisters that traveled to Quito and with them was a 13-year-old girl named Mariana de Jesus Torres. It was highly unusual for a girl of that age to travel alone without her parents, much less embark on a journey with the intention of starting a religious vocation at 13. However, her parents had granted permission for her to travel with her aunt, the Mother Prioress, for they realized that she was a chosen soul that was given the grace at an early age to know that she was to give her life to God. At a later time, Mariana was to take her vows and eventually become Mother Prioress herself.

In 1582, when she was 18, the Blessed Mother appeared to Mariana and asked her if she would be willing to offer her life for the sins of the 20th century, particularly for the sins of blasphemy, heresy, and impurity. In this apparition, Mariana was given to know all that was to happen during this time and appeared to die from the knowledge of it. She saw herself put before the divine tribunal and given a choice of either staying in heaven or going back to earth to suffer for us. At the request of the Blessed Mother, Mariana agreed to go back to earth. From then on, she became a victim soul for our times.

On February 2, 1594, as Mariana was praying to the Blessed Mother under the title of Our Lady of Good Success, she was granted the privilege of an apparition from her at which time Our Lady of Good Success said:

I am Mary of Good Success, whom you have invoked with such tender affection. Your prayer has pleased me very much. Your faith has brought me here. Your love has invited me to visit you....³

Our Lady told Mother Mariana of the terrible time the 20th century would be. During this and other apparitions, other prophecies were revealed. These prophecies spoke of the corruption, suppression, and unavailability of the sacraments. She spoke of the crisis in the Catholic Church, particularly of the clergy. On January 16, 1599, Our Lady of Good Success commanded a statue to be made to her likeness.

Now I ask and command you to have a statue to be made for the consolation and preservation of my convent and for those faithful souls of that epoch during which there will be a great devotion to me, for I am the Queen of Heaven under many invocations....With the making of this statue I will favor not only my convent, but also the people of Quito—and all the people throughout the centuries.⁴

Our Lady of Good Success told Mother Mariana that this statue was to be made for the following reasons:

First, so that men in the future might realize how powerful I am in placating Divine Justice and obtaining mercy and pardon for every sinner who comes to me with a contrite heart. For I am the Mother of Mercy and in me there is only goodness and love.

And second,...when tribulations of spirit and sufferings of the body oppress them and they seem to be drowning in this bottomless sea, let them gaze at my holy image and I will always be there ready to listen to their cries and soothe their pain. Tell them that they should always run to their Mother with confidence and love....⁵

Over the course of ten years Mother Mariana struggled with the issue of the making of the statue. Many obstacles prevented the sculpting of it. One obstacle was a fear of idolatry on the part of the native people in Quito. Another was Mother Mariana's

personal fear of not being believed and putting the convent in jeopardy. There was already an upheaval in the convent caused by an unfaithful and rebellious sister who incited some of the sisters against Mother Mariana and those who were faithful to the rule of their order. This sister was known as "*La Capitana*" (the Captain). Because of her evil ways, this sister was headed for hell. Mother Mariana was mystically informed of the horrible, eternal plight of this sister. She desired to save this soul from eternal damnation: the only solution given to Mother Mariana was that she, herself, was to take on the suffering and punishments of hell for this sister which she would otherwise have to endure for eternity. Mother Mariana agreed to this sentence which she endured for five years. She was the picture of virtue during this time and no one but her confessor knew of the tormented life she led. As a result of Mother Mariana's years of suffering, *La Capitana* converted. She lived the rest of her days in repentance for the sins she had committed.

In the year 1610, after completing her hellish sentence for *La Capitana*, she was able to gain the strength and courage to ask the Bishop for this request of a statue to be built. The bishop had been recently warned in a dream about his imminent death so he was more than willing to agree to this request.

Our Lady of Good Success had requested that a certain sculptor, Francisco del Castillo, known for his artistic ability and devotion to the Blessed Mother, fashioned the statue. This sculptor worked long and hard. When he was about to put the finish coat of paint on the statue he decided he would go to find the best paints he could acquire that would be the most fitting for the faces of the Mother of God and the Infant Jesus.

While he was gone something miraculous happened as prophesied in Our Lady of Good Success's first apparition: she promised



**Mother Mariana
Jesus de Torres**

At near right, the Plaza of San Francisco in Quito, Ecuador. The convent of the Conceptionists of Mother Mariana is located here. The statue of Our Lady of Good Success (far right), sculpted by Francisco del Castillo and painted by heaven, is displayed in the convent here.



that she herself would see to the completion of this statue. While the sculptor was away, Mother Mariana and the other sisters went to the choir loft to implore Our Lady of Good Success to keep her promise. The night before the artist was to return, Mother Mariana was alone praying in the choir loft. Suddenly Our Lady of Good Success appeared with Archangel Michael, the angels Gabriel and Raphael, and St. Francis of Assisi. The angels acknowledged their Queen, bowed, and St. Michael said, "Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy Daughter of God the Father." St. Gabriel said: "Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy Mother of God the Son." St. Raphael said, "Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy, Most Pure Spouse of the Holy Ghost." All together they chanted: "Hail to Thee, Mary Most Holy Temple and Sacrament of the Most Holy Trinity."⁶

Then, in the twinkling of an eye, the statue was completed. The statue became animated as Mary walked into the statue itself. Our Lady of Good Success began to sing the *Magnificat*. This occurred on the morning of January 16, 1611, at 3am. A choir of heavenly spirits began to sing *Salve Sancta Parens*, which awakened the rest of the convent. The sisters rushed to the choir loft and found the statue transformed and surrounded by a heavenly light. What a surprise awaited Francisco del Castillo when he returned the next day with his paints to finish the statue!

The official blessing of the statue by the bishop was set for February 2, 1611. On that day Our Lady of Good Success was placed above the seat of the Abbess chair at her own specific request as a sign to all that she was the one who governed and watched over the convent. Her official title

was "Mary of Good Success of the Purification." Years later, Mother Mariana was given yet another vision pertaining to the 20th century. The date of that apparition was February 2, 1634, Feast of the Purification, the 40th anniversary of the first appearance of Our Lady of Good Success to Mother Mariana.

This was to be the last time Our Lady of Good Success was to appear to Mother Mariana on this particular anniversary which is now also considered the feastday of Our Lady of Good Success. (In January of that next year, 1635, Mother Mariana went to her eternal reward.) As Mother Mariana was praying in the upper choir loft before the Blessed Sacrament, as she often did, the sanctuary lamp went out. Mother Mariana was left in complete darkness. The extinguishing of the sanctuary light signified the dire straits in which the Catholic Church would be during these times.

Our Lady of Good Success was quite clear that the decline of the Catholic Church would be blamed on a lax and perverse clergy. Certain members of the Catholic clergy would become as thieves stealing that tabernacle light, stealing what is rightfully ours by virtue of our baptism in the Catholic Church—our Faith. They would rob us of doctrine, dogma, and tradition, ransacking the Church and leaving it in total darkness without even the light of the presence of the Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ Himself. Our Lady of Good Success explained the five reasons for the extinguishing of the light.

The first reason why the lamp was snuffed out was because in the end of the 19th and 20th



centuries, heresies would prevail in Ecuador and but universally.

As these heresies spread and dominate, the precious light of Faith will be extinguished in souls by the almost total corruption of customs.⁷

The second reason was that her religious community in these times would be infected with bad attitudes and false charity as a result of the pervading situation of the Church at the time. Many vocations would be lost as a direct result.

The faithful souls would suffer a continuous and slow martyrdom, weeping in secret and imploring that such dire times be shortened.⁸

The third reason the light failed was due to the fact that during this century a worldwide campaign against the virtues of chastity and purity would succeed in ruining the youth. Our Lady of Good Success affirmed, "There will be almost no virgin souls in the world!"⁹

The fourth reason the lamp was put out was to demonstrate how the Freemasons and other secret

sects would have so much influence on society and the Church. Our Lady foretold:

During these unfortunate times evil will invade childhood innocence. In this way, vocations to the priesthood will be lost, resulting in a true calamity.¹⁰

Our Lady of Good Success could foresee that there would still be some good, faithful religious that would be willing to suffer all for the salvation of souls and sustenance of the Holy Catholic Church.

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 attain. How the Church will suffer during this dark night! Lacking a prelate and a father to guide them...many priests will lose their spirit, placing their souls in great danger.¹¹

The poor priestly souls that would be left to uphold the Church would suffer greatly.

Against them the impious will rage a cruel war, overwhelming them with vituperations, calumnies and vexations in order to stop them from fulfilling their ministry. But they, like strong pillars, will remain unswerving and will confront everything with a spirit of humility and sacrifice with which they will be vested, by virtue of the infinite merits of my most Holy Son, Who will love them in the innermost fibers of His Most Holy and Tender Heart. Our Lady of Good Success predicted "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...How the Church will suffer during this dark night! Lacking a prelate and a father to guide them with paternal love, gentleness, strength, wisdom and prudence, many priests will lose their spirit, placing their souls in danger."¹²

Our Lady of Good Success implored that the people of this time should "clamor insistently" to the Heavenly Father for an end to "these ominous times" sending to the Church a prelate and father who would restore the spirit to the priests.¹³

The fifth reason the lamp went out was due to those who have the financial means to help the Church but do nothing. Because of their uncaring attitude toward God and His Church, they would have allowed evil to seemingly triumph.

Due to the extreme wickedness that Mother Mariana saw in these visions, she fainted and remained unconscious for two days. The doctor, unable to revive her, expected her death to be at hand. But Mother Mariana miraculously awoke and returned to health to live another year. So important was this message for the world that Mother

Mariana's last thoughts were of this devotion and the message of Our Lady of Good Success. In her last will and testament, she wrote:

While the Divine Master hung from that shameful gibbet of the Cross with His life slowly ebbing away amidst almost infinite pain and torment, He spoke the fourth word or testament which He bequeathed to mankind by giving us His own Mother for our mother. He thus addressed the Virgin, saying "Woman, behold thy son," the beloved disciple. And turning to him said, "Behold thy Mother."...Behold your Heavenly Mother, Mary Most Holy of Good Success. She will always give you good success.¹⁴

Have a great love for the Blessed Virgin; imitate her virtues, above all her profound humility, her ardent love for God and poor sinners, her simplicity and childlike innocence. Let there be no deceptions or hypocrisies in your souls. Preserve and propagate devotion under the invocation of Our Lady of Good Success, for with it you will obtain from Jesus and Mary everything you ask...You should also devotedly care for your true treasure and make her known and loved by as many souls as possible; assuring them that with this devotion they will always obtain good successes both in time and eternity.

Have recourse to her in all your spiritual and temporal needs. When your souls suffer temptations and are immersed in grief, and if the star of your vocation is hidden by Divine permission from the sight of your soul, turn to her with confidence and say, "Star of the stormy sea of my mortal life, may your light shine upon me so that I do not stray from the path that leads me to heaven."¹⁵

Our Lady of Good Success promised the following:

The small number of souls, who hidden, will preserve the treasures of the Faith and practice virtue will suffer a cruel, unspeakable and prolonged martyrdom. Many will succumb to death from the violence of their sufferings and those who sacrifice themselves for the Church and their country will be counted as martyrs. In order to free men from the bondage to these heresies, those whom the merciful love of my most Holy Son has designated to effect the restoration, will need great strength of will, constancy, valor and confidence of the just. There will be occasions when all will seem lost and paralyzed. This then will be the happy beginning of the complete restoration.¹⁶

Our Lady of Good Success is asking us to be faithful to the Catholic Church, to pray for the restoration of all things in her Son as Mother Mariana did 400 years ago for us. We must unite our prayers and beg her for protection until we see the full restoration of the Church. The situation is grave and may become more grave before we see Our Lady of Good Success triumphant. May we be granted the graces of perseverance and valor to carry this cross together to save the Church and this sinful world.

In the apparition of 1619, Our Lord asked Mother Mariana to be a victim soul for our times. We too in a very special way have been called to imitate her by virtue of the grace we have been given to know the Truth—the gift of knowledge in the Faith that we have undeservedly received. We must imitate her and carry our daily crosses with "valor and perseverance" for the good of the Church. For as Christ stated to Mother Mariana, "For all times I have need of valiant souls to save my Church and the prevaricating world."¹⁸ Only then will we see "good success" in our fight against "principalities and powers." With the weapon of "Good Success" we cannot fail in our battle for our souls and others' souls. With Our Lady of Good Success beside us, a good success in Victory is certain.

To learn more about the story of Our Lady of Good Success and the devotion to Mary under this title contact: Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Heckenkamp, 913 N. Lake, Rd., Oconomowoc, WI 53066. Phone: (262)567-0920. The books in the Bibliography are available by contacting the author. ☐

Married for 24 years, Mrs. Heckenkamp and her family assist at the Latin Mass at St. Pius V Church, Mukwonago, Wisconsin. She lives in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin with her husband and six homeschooled children (two of whom are in college), ages 6-22 years. Three years ago, Mr. and Mrs. Heckenkamp adopted a family of four children from Colombia, South America, at which time they visited Quito, Ecuador and made a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Good Success.

¹ Taken from "The Testament of Mother Mariana de Jesus Torres," Jan. 16, 1635, which she read on her deathbed where she expired at 3pm, the same time as Our Lord. *A Spanish Mystic in Quito: Sor Mariana de Jesus Torres*, pp. 130, 131.

² *La Sonrisa De La Señora: Historia de la Virgen del Buen Suceso*, Ch. 1.

³ *Our Lady of Good Success Novena and Prayer Booklet*, Prologue, p. 13.

⁴ *Our Lady of Good Success—Prophecies for Our Times*, pp. 47, 48.

⁵ *Stories and Miracles of Our Lady of Good Success*, p. 25.

⁶ *Our Lady of Good Success—Prophecies for Our Times*, p. 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 55.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 56.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹⁴ *A Spanish Mystic in Quito: Sor Mariana de Jesus Torres*, p. 129.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131.

¹⁶ *Our Lady of Good Success—Prophecies for Our Times*, p. 55.

¹⁷ *Stories and Miracles of Our Lady of Good Success*, p. 57.

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