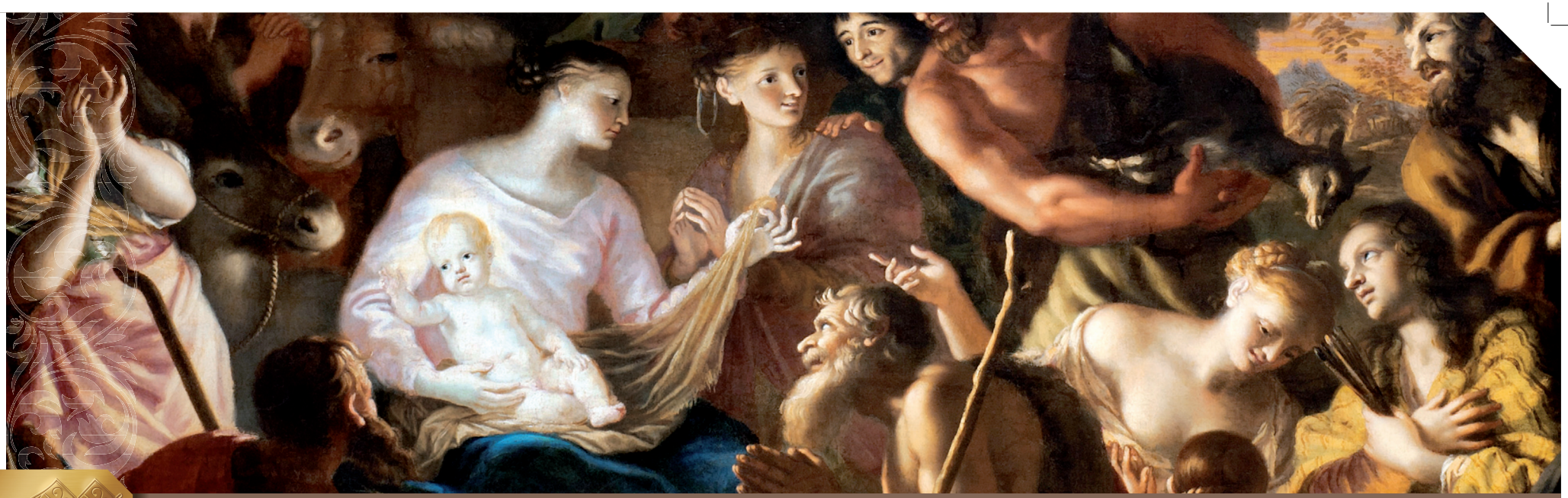


THE APPEALS OF OUR LADY

APPARITIONS AND MARIAN SHRINES IN THE WORLD

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary at PESQUEIRA

BRAZIL, 1936

On August 6, 1936 Arthur Teixeira ordered his daughter Maria da Luz and Maria da Conceição to go to a certain place to collect seeds of the castor oil plant. The two obeyed and set out, talking about the past persecutions and dangers. At a certain point, Maria da Luz asked her companion: **'What would you do if Lampião came at this precise moment?'**. Immediately she answered: **'Our Lady will have to indicate to us a way so that the bandit does not hurt us'**. And looking towards the mountains, she was surprised for a moment: on the top of the mountain she seemed to discern the image of a woman with a baby who was making signs with her hand. Pointing to the mountains, she said in a loud voice: **'Look at that image!'**. Maria da Luz looked in the direction indicated and she too saw the image of a beautiful lady with a baby in her arms. For a few moments, neither of the two dared to pronounce a word, perhaps remembering the conversation and the fear of the bandits. But then, the apprehension having ceased, they noticed that the woman was very beautiful and that the baby she was carrying in her arms was even more. The woman called them making signs with her free hand. Like dismayed, they ran home even forgetting the basket. Taken by exhaustion, they could not utter any word when their mother questioned them about the incident. Subsequently, with incomplete phrases, they explained what they had seen. Their mother, particularly intrigued, after asking them many questions, only said: **'It is your own invention, now it is time to eat lunch'**. Upon the arrival of Mr. Arthur, his wife set the table, but the two girls were late in coming. Noticing their absence, Arthur asked about them and his wife told him their story. The girls were seated in the attic of the house and were talking about the apparition. How beautiful was the woman with the baby! And how she had called them! Great was the desire to return to that place so see her more closely. Having heard the conversation, Arthur called them with the intention to reprimand them, but his wife begged him to go to that place with the girls to verify whether a person was truly there, perhaps hidden. Equipped with a sickle and followed by the girls, Arthur headed towards the mountain. He crossed the place in the upper part and began to open up a path between the expanse of Xique-Xique and Macambira. It was difficult to open a passage between the rocks and the thorn covered cliffs. After about twenty minutes he had not yet reached the summit, but great was his surprise when he heard himself called by the two girls who, exultant, indicated to him the place where the image had appeared. The girls, anxious to see the apparition, rushed towards that spot, passing through bushes and brambles, without even tearing their clothes. After much labor, Arthur Teixeira reached the two girls, even more amazed in seeing them pass through all the difficulties, without any distress. Their father observed attentively the rocks and the caves that were located in the vicinity, without finding any sign of the woman. The girls showed him and repeatedly described the place where she was but, despite all the efforts, Arthur could not see anything of what the girls were asserting. Disillusioned and convinced that the girls were prey of hallucinations, he ordered them to ask what it was about. **"Who are you?"**, asked Maria da Luz. And the Lady answered: 'I am the Grace'. **'What are you doing, Lady, in this place?'**, she asked again. 'I came to warn you that there shall be three chastisements sent by God. Tell the people to pray and do penance'.

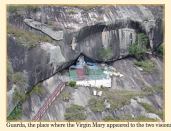
Surprised by the words pronounced by the apparition, the three of them returned home in silence and told everything to Don Auta. Soon all the neighborhood came to know of the occurrence. The people rushed to see the place of the apparition, and every day the two girls went on the mountain to pray. Every afternoon, the Rosary was recited in that place and the Office of Our Lady was sung. Many went there truly believing in the apparition, while others went for simple curiosity. As predictable, the news spread in all the region like an oil slick, and the faithful rushed from everywhere to pray and ask requests to the Virgin Mary. On the third day, many people in the crowd said that they would have believed only if the image had given a sign visible to everyone. With regret, the girls asked for a sign in order that everyone could be convinced that they were not lying. 'I will do it', stated the image. On the following day, August 10, the girls went to visit their favorite place at dawn. As soon as they reached it, the image pointed out to them the water that was gushing from the rock in front of the place of the apparition. In the rock there was a small cavity without cracks. It was full of water, and Our Lady said: 'To heal illnesses'. Triumphant, the two girls ran home to tell their mother about the incident. It was then that the whole family, accompanied by many people, headed to the mountain where the water was flowing, and in the spot where the image was appearing they found a white mark next to footprints, belonging to a woman and a small child, imprinted in the stone (rock). After being questioned, the apparition responded that one of the prints was hers and the other one of her son. With the appearance of the water, the news spread further. From everywhere, the faithful were rushing to this holy place. Also the vicar of Pesqueira, Father Manoel Marques, heard talk about the apparition and ordered that the girl be brought to the palace of the Diocesan Bishop to explain what had happened. The priest in charge of questioning the visionaries recounts: "On August 15, 1936, at 3:30 PM, the Bishop of Pesqueira ordered me to meet a man at the reception, who had come with his daughter to make a statement before the Bishop, regarding an apparition in the place called Guarda. Indeed, I met a gentleman named Arthur, who seemed an ordinary man, simple and calm. He presented me his daughter named Maria da Luz. With few words, he explained to me that he came to Pesqueira at the request of Father Manoel Marques, vicar of the city, in order to provide information about some apparitions that his daughter and another girl had witnessed. Maria da Luz told me that, in the month of May, for fear of Lampião, she used to hide with her mother and sisters in the thicket, and that in that period they were reciting the last novenas hidden in the thicket. She also said that after two days of anxiety for the passing of Lampião in those parts, they could not stop thinking about the actions and the crimes that he usually committed in that region. Moreover, she mentioned that, on August 6, she had been sent by her father, accompanied by an older girl named Maria da Conceição, to collect seeds of the castor oil plant. Along the way, Maria da Luz had asked Maria da Conceição what would she have done if Lampião had come suddenly. Maria da Conceição answered her that Our Lady would have had to protect them. At that moment, Maria da Conceição raised her eyes towards the mountain and on a rock saw an image that seemed to call them. **'Look at that image! It seems to be Our Lady!'** exclaimed Maria da Conceição, pointing in the direction where she had seen the apparition. Then, Maria da Luz looked and saw the same image. Both returned home and told the incident to their parents. After lunch, agreeing to the request of his wife, the father, skeptical, went with the girls to the said place, and climbed, with a thousand difficulties, to the spot where the two girls had seen the image. The girls indicated and described the apparition, but Arthur could not see it. Then, at the suggestion of the father, the girls asked the image: **'Who are you?'**, and the image responded: 'I am the Grace'. Then they asked her what she wanted, and the image responded: 'I came to warn you that there shall be three chastisements sent by God', and added: 'Tell the people to pray much and do penance'. From that day on, the girls never ceased to see the image, and for this reason they always desired to go to that place to talk with her. The news of the event spread rapidly and in a few days that place became a destination of a true pilgrimage. On August 20, I (the priest whom the Bishop had put in charge to follow the case and who is recounting these events), and Father Marques (the vicar of the parish) went to Guarda, where I met, in their home, the family and the two girls: Maria da Luz, 13 or 14 years old, simple and very devout to the Virgin Mary, and Maria da Conceição, shorter, but 16 years old. They lived in a farmhouse, with the walls covered by images of saints. The mother of Maria da Luz presented herself as devoted to the Heart of Jesus, belonging to the apostolate of Cimbres. It was a large family, and apparently, Christian. After a few moments of pause, Maria da Luz said: **'While the gentleman and the priest were climbing the mountain, I was at the rock with Maria da Conceição. Our Lady alerted us that the priest was coming, she was smiling a lot. She ordered us to go prepare the house, to welcome the gentlemen'**. We (the two priests) followed the father and the two girls to the site that was 400 or 500 meters distant from the house, through various hills, up to a flat rock that could be reached only in bare feet. On the walk towards the site, I asked: **'Why does the image want to speak really to me?'**. The two girls answered: **'We asked if she wished to speak to a priest, like the gentleman had ordered, and she had answered yes'**. **'Which priest?'** we asked. **'Father Marques (the vicar of the parish)?'** And she said: 'No'. **'Would you like a friar?'**, and she answered no. **'Would you like Father Alfredo?'**. She said no. **'Then whom would you like?'**. We didn't know the name of the gentleman, and so she said: **'The priest who wrote the questions'**. With much difficulty we reached a spot from which the site was seen. Then the girls said: **'Look ... she is in front of the door and she is blessing us'**. I stopped and looked attentively, but I did not see anything. I had a strange sensation, but I was unable to see the image. I drew closer and observed the place: a real cliff. The site was brighter with respect to the nearby areas, like a white towel spread out among the stones. Under the rock there was a small cave and at its bottom a spot moist (of water). I asked Mr. Arthur that he would move to the side and that Maria da Conceição come down lower, so that she would not hear the questions that I wished to pose to each one of them. Thus, I asked Maria de Luz to tell me whether she was seeing Our Lady. She answered to me: **'She is there'**, pointing to the brightest spot. Then I said to her: **'I ask you, in the name of Our Lady, to tell me only the truth and not lie. How is the figure of Our Lady that you see?'**. Maria da Luz answered: **'It is similar to Our Lady of Mount Carmel in the Cathedral of Pesqueira, but her mantle is blue and the dress is cream color and she wears a belt. She holds a baby with her left arm, and both have a beautiful crown on their head. I see her small foot, and the baby wraps his arm around her neck'**. I asked her: **'How is according to you the color cream?'**. Maria da Luz answered: **'A color between white and yellow'**. I let Maria da Luz come down and called Maria da Conceição, who made the same statements as Maria da Luz without any difference. To verify whether or not she was saying the truth, I said to her: **'Listen, my daughter, the other girl said that the Virgin Mary was on this side. Why do you tell me the opposite?'** Maria da Conceição looked and then said to me: **'She is not there'**. I understood that the girl was not lying, she was telling the truth. Then I called Maria da Luz and begged her to ask the image her name, Maria da Luz asked: **'Lady, what is your name?'**. Then she reported to me: **'She says that she is called Grace'**. Then I asked her: **'Is she sad?'**. Both answered no, they said that she smiled and seemed very happy. I invited them to ask the image if she saw me. **'Lady, do you see the Father?'** - asked Maria da Luz, who added: **'She said yes'**. Then I asked: **'Can I ask some questions in another language?'**. And the girls: **'She says yes'**. In the same instant they exclaimed: **'Look she and the baby are laughing'**. Then I asked questions in Latin and German, and the girls, who did not know those languages at all, correctly reported in Portuguese the answers of Our Lady. **'Es mater Divinae Gratias?' (Are you the Mother of Divine Grace?)** 'I am'. **'Es Mater Salvatoris Nostri?' (Are you the Mother of Our Savior?)** 'Yes'. **'Es tantum mediatrix gratiarum necesarie ad salutam?' (Are you the mediatrix of graces necessary for salvation?)** 'Yes'. **'Desideras permanere hic?' (Do you desire to remain here?)** 'Yes'. **'Aut desideras reliquere hunc locum?' (Or do you desire to maintain this place?)** 'Yes'. **'Ad primam partem?' (As the primary place?)** 'Yes'. **'Brasilia castigatus erit a Deo? (Will Brazil be punished by God?)** 'Yes'. **'Quis ego sum cognosces? (Do you know who I am?)** 'Yes'. **'Quare negasti antea? (For this reason you denied before?)** 'No'. **'Wer bist du? - Who are you?'** 'The Mother of Heaven'. **'Wie heißt das Kind auf deinem Arm? - What is the name of the baby you carry in your arms?'** 'JESUS'. **'Is the image a soul or Our Lady?'** 'The Mother of Heaven'. **'What is the purpose of your visit here?'** 'JESUS sent me'. **'Why?'** 'To tell that difficult times will come'. **'Will these things happen soon (time of the apparition: 1936)?'** 'No'. **'What must be done to remove the chastisement?'** 'Penance and prayer'. **'What is the invocation of this apparition?'** 'Invocation of the Graces'. **'Will priests and Bishops suffer much?'** 'Yes'. **'What does this water signify?'** 'It is a sign that I sent'. **'Does this water serve for illnesses?'** 'For those who have faith'. **'Will this be a place of devotion?'** 'Yes'. **'Will the persecution of the Church be great?'** 'Yes'. **'How will we be able to speak about this apparition without the order of the ecclesiastical authorities?'** 'Later on they will allow it'. **'If you are the Mother of God, give us your blessing'**. Suddenly the two visionaries exclaimed: **'Look there, she is blessing us!'** Both made the sign of the cross". We must underline the unshakeable conviction that the two visionaries maintained for the whole time, despite the threats and the persecutions that they endured. Upon his return to Pesqueira, Father Marques (who did not give credit to what happened) offered a contradictory account of what he saw, but when he presented it to the Bishop; he could not read anything, because the sheets were blank. The Bishop had the two girls examined by a physician (Dr. Lydio Parsiba). They were normal in everything. The apparitions proceeded, and the water continued to flow from the rock. Extraordinary healings began, followed by pilgrimages. A fence was built to protect the spring, but the police demolished it, so the spring dried up. Then Mr. Arthur had it rebuilt, and the water began to flow again. The apparitions resumed and Our Lady said: 'Be patient, these are the things that come from God'. After some months, Maria da Luz expressed the desire to go to the convent and was received by the Colégio Santa Sofia of Garanhuns, of the Congregation of the Ladies of Christian Education. Among the messages that the Virgin Mary communicated there is also the one that announced the coming of Communism in Brazil and the possibility for bloody events similar to the ones that occurred in Spain during the civil war. The remedies suggested by Our Lady to avoid all this were prayer and penance. In 1966, the Vatican confirmed the apparitions of Pesqueira as authentic. These apparitions are among the five apparitions confirmed by the Church of Rome.

Image illustrating the apparition of Our Lady to the two girls Maria da Luz and Maria da Conceição

The visionaries when they were younger

Maria da Luz took the name of Sister Adele and embraced the religious life entering into the Congregation of the Ladies of Christian Education. Sister Adele with a reputation of sanctity on October 13, 2013, and Maria de Conceição died in 1988

The priest who questioned the visionaries, Father José Kehrle



Guarda, the place where the Virgin Mary appeared to the two visionaries

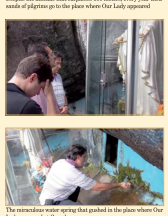
The place of the apparition of Our Lady is located in the native reservation of the Xukuru, a region in constant conflict. Therefore, the Prefecture of Pesqueira built a new Shrine next to the Cross of the city. The new Shrine of Our Lady of Cruzes has a grotto four meters high. Inside it there is an image of Holy Mary almost two meters high. The Shrine includes a chapel built by the Diocese of Pesqueira

Statue that represents the Virgin Mary as she invites to recite the Rosary

Votive offerings

Statue located at Guarda

Despite the altitude that surpasses 600 meters, every year thousands of pilgrims go to the place where Our Lady appeared



The miraculous water spring that gushed in the place where Our Lady appeared at Guarda