

# Emblem of Victory: The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Colonial Painting of the Viceroyalty of New Spain

Iraida Rodríguez-Negrón

Countless images of the Immaculate Conception were produced in the Spanish Americas during the colonial period. Undoubtedly, this Virgin was one of the most popular Marian advocations in the new territories. That popularity was not surprising considering that the Immaculate Conception was so highly venerated in the Spanish mainland.

During the years of discovery and colonization of the Americas, the Crown and the Catholic Church in Spain relied on the spiritual assistance of the Virgin Mary for their efforts of conquest and evangelization. This sentiment is directly expressed by the Spanish Friar Antonio de Santa María in his 1682 publication entitled *España triunfante y la iglesia laureada, en todo el globo del mundo por el patrocinio de María Santísima en España* ["Triumphant Spain and the Church honored, in all the world thanks to the patronage of the Holy Mary in Spain"], where he writes: "No one can doubt that the triumph of the conquest is due to the Queen of the Angels."<sup>1</sup> In the frontispiece of the publication, Augustin Bouttats translates Santa Marías's ideas into images (Figure 1). At the lower right corner, an allegorical image of "Spain Triumphant" bears a standard with the image of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>2</sup>

Images of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception were displayed soon after the conquest in the territory of New Spain, what is now Mexico and Central America. The reoccurrence of this theme can only attest to the profound devotion exercised towards this Marian avocation despite the fact that, at that time, the Catholic Church was immersed in intense theo-

logical debates concerning the doctrine. This paper will examine the representations of the Immaculate Virgin in the Viceroyalty of New Spain, addressing the development of the iconography and considering the influence of European models; but at the same time, and of utmost importance, it will take into account the devotion exercised towards the *Inmaculada* in the New World. Evaluating these images in the context in which they were created is the best course by which to achieve a full understanding of their significance in the colonial period.

The belief in the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary became a dogma of the Catholic Church in 1854, when Pope Pius IX proclaimed: "We believe that the most blessed Virgin Mary at the first instant of her conception was preserved immaculate from all stain of original sin."<sup>3</sup>

This conviction originated in the Early Christian Church and by the ninth century was transported to the West.<sup>4</sup> Later, theologians in the Middle Ages struggled to define and support the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. On the other hand, among those who opposed the doctrine was the Dominican St. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1226-1274). Under his leadership, the Dominican order would oppose it, too, believing that the Virgin was not purified in the womb of her mother until after her conception; but they would represent the minority. Almost all the other religious orders supported the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, among them the Benedictines, Jesuits, and especially the Franciscans.<sup>5</sup> The latter would be the champions of the doctrine in Spain, and

This paper is an abbreviated version of my Thesis submitted for the Masters Degree at the George Washington University in 2002. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to Professor Barbara von Barghahn, who directed my Thesis, and to Professor Christopher Wilson. I will be forever grateful to them for introducing me to Latin American Colonial Art.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Barbara Duncan, "Statue Paintings of the Virgin," *Gloria in Excelsis: the Virgin and the Angels in Viceregal Painting of Peru and Bolivia* Exh. Cat. (New York: Center for the Inter-American Relations, 1986) 32.

<sup>2</sup> Suzanne L. Stratton, *The Immaculate Conception in Spanish Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994) 139. The mystery of the Immaculate Conception is accurately explained in a 1999 Columbian exhibition catalogue: "El título 'Inmaculada Concepción' no se refiere a la concepción de Cristo en el seno de María, tema que se representa en el arte como la 'Anunciación,' sino a la concepción de María en el seno de santa Ana. De acuerdo con este dogma, la Virgen fue escogida por Dios desde el principio de los tiempos para contribuir al Misterio de la Redención. Por lo tanto ella misma debía

ser concebida sin la mancha del pecado original." [The "Immaculate Conception" refers not to the conception of Christ in the womb of the Virgin Mary, which is represented in art as the Annunciation, but to the conception of the Virgin in Saint Anne's womb. According to the dogma, the Virgin was chosen since the beginning of times to contribute to the Redemption of mankind. Therefore, she had to be conceived without the stain of original sin.] Teresa Morales de Gómez, "La Inmaculada Concepción," *Tota Pulchra: Exposición de la Inmaculada* (Bogotá: Museo de Arte Colonial, 1999) 7.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Helen Hills, "Iconography and Ideology: Aristocracy, Immaculacy and Virginité in Seventeenth-Century Palermo," *Oxford Art Journal* 17.2 (1994): 20.

<sup>4</sup> Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *The Iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (New York: College of Art Association of America in conjunction with The Art Bulletin, 1957) 6.

<sup>5</sup> Levi D'Ancona 10.

consequently in New Spain.

Soon after the conquest of New Spain, between the years 1519-1520, Hernán Cortes, leader of the *conquistadores*, wrote to King Charles V requiring the presence of missionary orders to aid in the conversion of Indians to Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Around 1523 the Franciscan friars were among the first to come from Spain, and were soon followed by others like the Carmelites, Jesuits, Augustinians, all devoted to the Immaculate Conception and responsible for the introduction and evolution of local cults.<sup>7</sup>

A 1637 work by the Mexican artist Basilio de Salazar (active c.1624-1645),<sup>8</sup> entitled *Franciscan Exultation of the Immaculate Conception*, documents the devotion to this Marian advocacy by the Franciscans of New Spain (Figure 2). A gigantic image of the Virgin hovers above and illuminates a multitude of Franciscan monks and nuns with her golden radiance. Just below the *Inmaculada* is an image of Saint Francis of Assisi.

It is safe to assume that the Spanish ecclesiastical authorities had the goal of acquiring more devotees to the doctrine in hopes that popular devotion would contribute to the cause of having the Immaculate Conception embraced officially as dogma.<sup>9</sup> In 1585, the Third Provincial Council in Mexico proclaimed as mandatory the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, under penalty of mortal sin to those who did not oblige. These feasts were celebrated with the same enthusiasm and grandeur as those in the Spanish mainland, for it was one of the most important in the liturgical calendar. One of these was recorded in the year 1618 when the bishop of the city of Mexico ordered celebrations after Pope Paul V expressly prohibited any disputes concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin.<sup>10</sup> The viceroy of New

Spain himself was in charge of the celebration that took place in December of that same year. Ephemeral decorations were created for the event, like temporary altarpieces and a triumphal arch, decorated with the attributes of the *Inmaculada*, along with the celebration of “triumphal processions and literary competitions.”<sup>11</sup>

A number of literary works in honor of the Immaculate Conception were composed at the time. Among the most famous are those by “New Spain’s most illustrious woman of letters,” Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. One example is a carol that was sung for the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1676 at the Cathedral of Mexico.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Sor Juana Inés participated in literary contests held by the University of Mexico to celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1682 and 1683.<sup>13, 14</sup>

Every social class in New Spain at the time was devoted to the *Inmaculada*. It is understandable that the Spaniards and those of direct Spanish descent would share the fervor that originated in the mainland. But it is also known, as William B. Taylor documents, that the Indian population also participated in devotion towards the Immaculate Conception. For example, since the sixteenth century, the hospitals for Indians had been dedicated to and placed under the protection of this Marian advocacy.<sup>15</sup>

Considering these facts, it is safe to assume that the images of the Immaculate Conception produced in New Spain during colonial times are closely related to and influenced by the immense devotion that the population of the territory professed to her. But what did the viewers see in these images? What were the interpretations made of them? A brief analysis of the evolution of the Immaculate Conception in Spanish colonial painting of the Viceroyalty of New Spain can provide

<sup>6</sup> Donna Pierce, “New Spain: Metamorphosis in Spanish Colonial Art,” *Cambios: The Spirit of Transformation in Spanish Colonial Art* (Albuquerque: Santa Barbara Museum of Art in cooperation with the U of New Mexico P, 1992) 74.

<sup>7</sup> Santiago Sebastián, “Diffusion of the Counter-Reformation Doctrine,” *Temples of Gold, Crowns of Silver: Reflections of Majesty in the Viceregal Americas*. Exh. Cat. (The Art Museum of the Americas; the Organization of the American States; the George Washington University, Dimock Gallery, Washington D.C., 1991) 76.

<sup>8</sup> Active in New Spain.

<sup>9</sup> The brotherhood or *cofradía* of the Immaculate Conception was instituted in Mexico by a papal bull signed by Paul V in 1612. Juana Gutiérrez Haces, “Purísima Concepción,” *Cristóbal de Villalpando, ca. 1649-1714*, Juana Gutiérrez Haces, Pedro Angeles, Clara Bargellini, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar (México: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1997) 232.

<sup>10</sup> The bishop of the city of Mexico declared: “su santidad había mandado que no se disputase de la Inmaculada Concepción de Nuestra Señora cosa que había causado grande alegría en España y se había celebrado, que a esta ciudad correspondía hacer las mayores demostraciones.” [The Pope has ordered that there can be no more disputes concerning the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, which calls for celebrations in Spain, and this city should celebrate immensely.] Quoted in Gutiérrez Haces, 232.

<sup>11</sup> Gutiérrez Haces 232.

<sup>12</sup> Alfonso Alfaro, “La Virgen y su Enemiga,” *Artes de México* 37 (1997): 49. The publication of this carol included a frontispiece with an image of the *Inmaculada* as the *Tota Pulchra* (see footnote 20). Published in: Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Obras Completas*, ed. Alfonso Méndez Plancarte (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951) 17.

<sup>13</sup> In both competitions, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz participated using two different pseudonyms. She won the first prize at one of the competitions. José Rojas Garcidueñas, prologue to: Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora, *Triunfo Parténico, que en glorias de María Santísima, inmaculadamente concebida, celebró la pontificia, imperial y regia Academia Mexicana en el bienio que como su rector la gobernó el doctor Don Juan de Narváez* (México: Ediciones Xochitl, 1945) 11-12.

<sup>14</sup> These festivities were extensively documented in Carlos Sigüenza y Góngora’s *Triunfo Parténico, que en glorias de María Santísima, inmaculadamente concebida, celebró la pontificia, imperial y regia Academia Mexicana en el bienio que como su rector la gobernó el doctor Don Juan de Narváez* (see footnote 13). In it, the author describes the events that took place during these festivities, including processions, theatre representations, and poetry contests (see footnote 13). He also devotes a whole chapter to the decorations of the events. Sigüenza y Góngora 75-123.

<sup>15</sup> William B. Taylor, “The Virgin of Guadalupe in New Spain: an inquiry into the social history of Marian devotion,” *American Ethnologist* 14.1 (February 1987): 11.

some answers.

European prototypes exercised the most influence in the iconography of religious images produced in New Spain. The Spanish missionary orders, who initially brought many of these to the Americas, established workshops within their institutions where they taught European subject matter and techniques to the Indians.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Indians were the first active artists in the colony of New Spain, employed mainly for the decoration of religious buildings. According to Gerónimo de Mendieta, a friar who documented the events of the first half of the sixteenth century, the Indians were quite accomplished in copying the images brought by the missionaries. He wrote, "After they were evangelized and saw our images, there is no altarpiece or image difficult for them to execute."<sup>17</sup> In fact, one of the first images of the Immaculate Conception produced in New Spain is thought to be that in a mural at the Franciscan Monastery of Saint Michael in Huejotzingo, Puebla (Figure 3).<sup>18</sup> Created in the sixteenth century by the Tlaucilos Indians, it could have been inspired by the *Tota Pulchra*, one of those many prints imported from Europe of the image of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>19</sup> The *Tota Pulchra* was the most common iconography of the Immaculate Conception in the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century: in the work, the Virgin is surrounded by many of her attributes clearly identified with phrases of the scriptural prefigurations and religious literature quoted to support the idea of Mary being conceived without original sin.<sup>20</sup>

Many European artists arrived in New Spain as soon as the colony was established. Concentrated in the city of Mexico, they considerably reduced the artistic production of the Indians and changed completely the path of colonial art. One reason was the establishment of the painter's guild in 1557, after which the Indians were prevented from working on important

commissions, and therefore, unable to participate first hand in the establishment of the Mexican Colonial School of Painting.<sup>21</sup>

One of the first Immaculate Conceptions executed in New Spain by the hand of a Spanish-born painter was a *Tota Pulchra*, the only surviving painting from an altarpiece of the Augustinian Church at Yuripundaro, Guanajuato; it was painted in 1576 by Francisco de Morales, who moved to the colony in 1562 (Figure 4).<sup>22</sup>

Baltasar Echave Ibá (c. 1595-1644), one of the pre-eminent Mexican artists working at the beginning of the seventeenth century, depicted an image of the Immaculate Conception hovering above an anthropomorphous "demon," half human, half serpent (Figure 5). The inclusion of this very peculiar demon below the Virgin may respond to the popular identification of the Immaculate Conception with the Apocalyptic Woman described in the book of Revelations, as seen by Saint John the Evangelist in his vision at Patmos; the attributes of this figure began to appear in the depictions of the *Inmaculada* in the latter part of the sixteenth century. In addition, the inclusion of the demon serves to accentuate the role of Mary as the New Eve. The first Eve was responsible for the fall of man and the second Eve, free from original sin, was to play a major role in the redemption of humanity.

The next generation of important artists in New Spain was clearly influenced by the styles that were in favor in seventeenth century Europe, the beginning of the Mexican Baroque. The European influence is clear in the *Purísimas* created by locally-born artists working in the colony. Considered the image best expressing the Immaculacy of the Virgin, the *Purísima* came to maturity during the second half of the seventeenth century. The Virgin now dressed in a white robe and blue mantle,<sup>23</sup> the most famous figures are those painted by

<sup>16</sup> Guillermo Tovar de Teresa, *Pintura y Escultura en Nueva España (1557-1640)* (México: Grupo Azabache, 1992) 47.

<sup>17</sup> Tovar de Teresa 193.

<sup>18</sup> This mural was published in Santiago Sebastián, *Iconografía e Iconología del Arte Novohispano* (México: Grupo Azabache, 1992) 46.

<sup>19</sup> This mural is very similar to an engraved frontispiece of a *circa* 1500 French Book of Hours entitled "Heures de la Vierge à l'usage de Rome," published in Stratton, 41. Many prints and paintings were shipped to the New World, coming mainly from the Spanish port city of Seville, through the lucrative art market that developed, especially during the seventeenth century. For a comprehensive analysis of this phenomenon see: Duncan Kinkead, "Juan de Luzón and the Sevillian Painting Trade with the New World in the Second Half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century," *Art Bulletin* 65 (1984).

<sup>20</sup> The title of the *Tota Pulchra* is drawn from chapter 4 verse 7 of the Song of Solomon: "Tota Pulchra es. Amica mea, et macula non est in te." ["Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee."] This verse had been associated with the Immaculate Conception since the twelfth century. Among the attributes, the most popular was the spotless mirror, the "speculum sine macula," which came from the Book of Wisdom, chapter 7 verse 26, which reads: "For she is a reflection of eternal light, a spotless mirror of the working of God." St. Bernard was the first to apply Song of Solomon 4:7 to the Virgin. The Song of Solomon was first associated with the Immaculate

Conception in the twelfth century by Abelard, in his treatise about the doctrine. Stratton, 40, 42.

<sup>21</sup> Tovar de Teresa 43.

<sup>22</sup> Tovar de Teresa 70.

<sup>23</sup> Up to the end of the seventeenth century, the "Inmaculadas" were dressed in a pink robe and blue mantle, as the Virgin's robes were described in the Holy Scriptures. The change in color of the Virgin's robe occurred after the founder of the Conceptionist Order (1511), Beatriz de Silva, attested to seeing the Virgin dressed in white robe and blue mantle. Manuel Trens, *María: Iconografía de la Virgen en el Arte Español* (Madrid: Editorial Plus-Ultra, 1974) 171. In addition, the Spanish art theoretician, Francisco Pacheco (1564-1644), also recommended, in his 1648 publication entitled *Arte de la Pintura*, that the Immaculate Conception should be dressed in a white robe and blue mantle. Francisco Pacheco, *Arte de la Pintura* (1638) vol.II (Madrid: Instituto de Valencia D. Juan, 1956) 209.

<sup>24</sup> The Lowe Art Museum, in Coral Gables Florida, owns one of the "Purísimas" by Murillo, which is believed to have been in the collection of an Archbishop in the city of Lima, Peru. Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño, *La obra pictórica completa de Murillo*, (Barcelona: Editorial Noguer, 1978). The painting was also published in Carol Damian, *The Virgin of the Andes: Art and Ritual in Colonial Cuzco* (Miami Beach: Grassfield Press, Inc., 1995) 40.

the Spanish Master Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1618-1682).<sup>24</sup> Worthy of mention are those created by Cristóbal de Villalpando (1649-1714), a prolific and creative artist of Mexican Baroque art, who worked during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Figure 6).<sup>25</sup>

Villalpando also created Immaculist images clearly influenced by the devotion professed to the doctrine at that time. An example is his image of the *Archangel Saint Michael*, the assistant of the Virgin in the battle against evil, as described in the book of Revelations (Figure 7). After his vision of the Apocalyptic Woman, St. John narrates, “And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.”<sup>26</sup> St. Michael, dressed in military armor, bears a standard with the image of the Immaculate Conception. A closer look at the banner reveals the *Inmaculada* surrounded by her attributes. This image suggests that St. Michael is not only the defender of the Church, but also the defender of the Immaculate Virgin.

Villalpando’s Archangel can be compared with the allegorical figure of *Spain Triumphant* who also bears a standard with an image of the Immaculate Virgin in the aforementioned frontispiece by Bouttats for Antonio de Santa María’s treatise (Figure 1). Similar is the posture, the manner in which both hold their standards, their helmets, and their capes fluttering behind them. As the title of Santa María’s work expresses, the Virgin Mary was credited with the victories of Spain in the world, and, consequently, the Immaculate Virgin was perceived as protector of the conquest and evangelization of the people in the Spanish Colonies of America.

At that time, a clear correspondence between the Virgin and the Church had been established. Even before the twelfth century, as John B. Knipping states, the Apocalyptic Virgin was interpreted as a symbol of the Church.<sup>27</sup> As mentioned earlier, the iconography of the Virgin was transplanted, becoming identified with the Immaculate Conception, victorious over original sin and a symbol of victory over heresy. This interpretation is evident in another type of *Inmaculada* in Colonial painting, the *Matter Intemerata*, like the one created in the eighteenth century by the Mexican Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz (1715-1770) (Figure 8). Inspired by European models, this type of Immaculate Conception was disseminated in the colonies by the Franciscan and the Jesuit Orders.<sup>28</sup> In these images the Virgin is isolated from the usually chaotic apocalyptic scene and confronts the demon by herself.

The identification of Morlete’s Virgin as an Immaculate Conception is substantiated not only by her vestments and by the twelve stars around her head, but also by the inscribed banderoles that are entangled in the whip and in the reins, the instruments that she uses to control the apocalyptic beast. The names of supporters of the doctrine are inscribed in these, among them the Franciscan Duns Scotus and the Spanish king Philip IV. In addition, two crossed keys acting as a bit for the dragon are clearly associated with the Roman Catholic Church, not only because of the symbolism of the key and its connection with St. Peter as the founder of the church, but also because the banderole entangled in them is inscribed with the names of two of his successors: popes Alexander VII (1655-1667) and Clement XIII (1758-1769). The Immaculate Virgin is seen by two witnesses as she stands over the head of the dragon, a scene that can be interpreted as the culmination of the promise of redemption found in Genesis chapter 3, verse 15, which foretells the role of the Immaculate Mother of God, free from original sin, in the redemption of humanity.<sup>29</sup> The Virgin as representative of the Church triumphs over evil and heresy.

The territory of New Spain was infested by millions of “apocalyptic dragons.” When the Spaniards arrived in America they saw the abundance of serpents as a sign of the many pagan souls that needed to be evangelized. Under the European mentality of the *conquistadores*, this essential symbol of pre-Columbian society became the devil in disguise.<sup>30</sup> Only the conversion to the Catholic Faith would liberate these souls from damnation. William B. Taylor suggests that this association between the Virgin and the Church was understood in colonial times, where records often referred to the Church as a “pious mother.” In addition, both Mary and the Church were considered as the “intercessors between the Christians and God.”<sup>31</sup>

Possibly related to a carol composed by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz for the celebration of the feast of the Immaculate Conception in the Cathedral of Puebla in 1689 is the iconographic program created by Villalpando for the dome of the same Cathedral, which further evidences the relationship between the Virgin and the Church and alludes to Immaculist ideas of the time (Figure 9). The *Glorification of the Virgin*, completed in 1689, is a particularly inventive composition. In a depiction of the heavens, the main section of the dome is that of the Virgin Mary holding the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist,

<sup>25</sup> The 1997 superb catalogue raisonné of Cristóbal de Villalpando’s oeuvre published, for the first time, all his different versions of the “Purísima.” Juana Gutiérrez Haces, Pedro Angeles, Clara Bargellini, and Rogelio Ruiz Gomar, *Cristóbal de Villalpando, ca. 1649-1714* (México: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1997).

<sup>26</sup> Rev. 12:7. King James Version of The Bible.

<sup>27</sup> John B. Knipping, *Iconography of the Counter Reformation in the Netherlands* vol. II (Nieuwkoop: Nieuwkoop and Leiden, 1974), 348.

<sup>28</sup> Trens 180.

<sup>29</sup> This corresponds to the Catholic Theological interpretation of the verse “ipsa conteret caput tuum” (She will bruise thy head), instead of the Protestant interpretation “ipse” (the Son will bruise thy head). Stratton 153, n. 53. Further proof of the correlation between the Immaculate Virgin and the Church is offered by comparing Morlete’s composition to a Netherlandish frontispiece by Gaspard Bouttats, dated 1690, that illustrates *The Church Vanquishing the Seven-Headed Dragon*. For illustration see: Knipping 354.

<sup>30</sup> Domingo Dufetel, “Entre Quetzalcóatl y el maligno,” in “La Serpiente Virreinal,” *Artes de México* 37 (1997): 7.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor 20.

thus uniting in one powerful image the two most controversial dogmas of the Catholic Church in the Counter Reformation period, the Immaculate Conception and the Sacrament of the Eucharist, both essential for the redemption of mankind.<sup>32</sup>

The colonial art historian Clara Bargellini has established the relationship between the carol and the iconography conceived by Villalpando. For example, Sor Juana Inés identifies the Immaculate Virgin as the “Throne of God...and of the Trinity seat,” the idea echoed by the composition of the dome where the Trinity is positioned above the Virgin.<sup>33</sup> In addition, in the pendentives below the Dome, Villalpando depicts four Old Testament heroines who prefigure the immaculacy of the Virgin: Esther, Judith, Jahel and Ruth.<sup>34</sup> Esther and Judith are alluded to by Sor Juana Inés in her carol.<sup>35</sup> Esther had been associated with the Immaculate Virgin since Medieval times; just as she was exempt from the law decreed by her husband, Mary was exempt from the law decreed by God, the law of original sin.<sup>36</sup> The other heroine, Judith, killed the evil Holofernes just as the Virgin killed the dragon.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, these Biblical women played an important role in the salvation of their people, as does Mary in the redemption of mankind.

The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception was declared patroness of the Spanish dominions in the year 1760, but for centuries, artists had already been successful in communicating the idea of the immaculacy of the Virgin, regardless of the abstract qualities of the doctrine. Untouched by original sin, to which all others are exposed, she hovers in the heavens, over everything. Thus, it was Mary, the Immaculate Virgin, who would be the most appropriate soldier against evil and sin. These ideas, as it has been illustrated, were deeply rooted in the minds of those devoted to the Virgin. The Spaniards brought them to the Americas where the Virgin’s battle against paganism and heresy would be reciprocated with innumerable conversions.

The population of New Spain learned from these images of the Immaculate Conception. They would follow the example of saints and religious personages who also venerated the Virgin, as seen in the aforementioned *Franciscan Exultation of the Immaculate Conception* (Figure 2).<sup>38</sup> And just like them, they acknowledged the sovereignty of the Immaculate Conception.

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<sup>32</sup> The relationship between the Immaculate Conception and the Eucharist is presented also in a silver guilt monstrance of the colonial period, encrusted with jewels, dated to c. 1780. This artifact was published in *México: Splendors of Thirty Centuries*. Exh. Cat. Introduction by Octavio Paz (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Boston: Little, Brown, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Clara Bargellini, “Glorificación de la Virgen,” *Cristóbal de Villalpando, ca. 1649-1714*, Juana Gutiérrez Haces, Pedro Angeles, Clara Bargellini, Rogelio Ruiz Gomar (México: Fomento Cultural Banamex, 1997) 220.

<sup>34</sup> Various female personages from the Old Testament were considered “typological counterparts” of the Virgin Mary. The most popular is Eve. The Virgin is the “Second Eve” who comes to amend the mistakes of the original one. Damian 32.

<sup>35</sup> “Judith a Holofernes venza./ Esther a Asuero mitigue./ Raquel a su Jacob prenda./ Sara a su marido libre:/ ; Judith, Esther, Raquel, Sara,/ sólo en vislumbres la pinten!” Juana Inés de la Cruz 105. Villalpando’s “Heroines” are published in Bargellini 220-221.

<sup>36</sup> The story and iconography of Esther, from the Book of Esther in the Vulgate, was analogous to the Immaculate Conception. Ahaseerus decreed the extermination of the Jews, ignoring the fact that his wife Queen Esther was a

Jew. In order to save her people, Esther pleaded before him. The act of presenting herself, uninvited, before the king was forbidden and punishable with death, but the king saved her, touching her with his scepter, saying: “This law was made for all human beings but not for you.” Like Esther, Mary was exempt from the law which condemned all men. And like Esther, Mary intercedes for her people. Levi D’Ancona 30.

<sup>37</sup> The altarpiece of the chapel of the Virgin of Guadalupe in the Monastery of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid, Spain, has an iconographic program in which the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception is accompanied by the heroines of the Old Testament. The altarpiece symbolizes the “triumph of the biblical women, that are prefigurations of the Virgin Mary.” Santiago Sebastián, *Contrarreforma y Barroco: Lecturas Iconográficas e Iconológicas* (Madrid: Alianza, 1981) 227-28.

<sup>38</sup> Many paintings in Colonial Art of Latin America represent the Immaculate Conception accompanied or surrounded by saints and other religious personages. Among them we can mention the Immaculate Conception by the Mexican Miguel Cabrera, dated to the eighteenth century, where the Virgin is revered by genuflecting saints, among them Saint Francis of Assisi and Saint Ignatius of Loyola. This painting was published in *Pintura Novohispana: Museo Nacional del Virreinato* (México: Americo Arte Editores S.A. de C.V., 1994) 90.



Figure 1. Augustin Bouttats, engraved frontispiece of Fray Antonio de Santa María, *España triunfante y la iglesia laureada, en todo el globo del mundo por el patrocinio de María Santísima en España*, 1682, Courtesy of The Hispanic Society of America, New York.



Figure 2. Basilio de Salazar, *Franciscan Exultation of the Immaculate Conception*, 1637, oil on canvas, 118 x 100 cm, Museo Regional de Queretano, Queretano, Mexico. CONACULTA.-INAH.-MEX. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.





[for left] Figure 3. Anonymous (Tlacuilos Indians), *The Virgin "Tota Pulchra,"* sixteenth century, fresco, Franciscan Monastery of Saint Michael in Huejotzingo, Puebla. CONACULTA.-INAH.-MEX. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

[left] Figure 4. Francisco de Morales, *Immaculate Conception,* oil on wood, 1576, 211 x 160 cm, Museo Nacional del Virreinato, Tepotzotlán, Mexico. CONACULTA.-INAH.-MEX. Reproduction authorized by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia.

[right] Figure 6. Cristóbal de Villalpando, *Immaculate Conception,* c. 1680, oil on canvas, 206 x 142 cm, Cathedral of Puebla, Mexico. CONACULTA.-MEX. Reproduction authorized by Dirección General de Sitios y Monumentos del Patrimonio Cultural. (Photo: Rafael Doniz - Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.)

Figure 5. Baltasar Echave Ibaía, *The Immaculate Conception,* 1620. CONACULTA.-INBA.-MEX. Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico, D.F.





Figure 7. Attributed to Cristóbal de Villalpando (c.1680-1689), Archangel Saint Michael, unsigned, oil on canvas, 165 x 106 cm, Private Collection. (Photo: Rafael Doniz - Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.)



Figure 8. Juan Patricio Morlete Ruiz, *The Immaculate Conception*, eighteenth century, oil on copper, 60 x 56 cm. CONACULTA.-INBA.-MEX. Museo Nacional de Arte, Mexico, D.F.





Figure 9. Cristóbal de Villalpando, *The Glorification of the Virgin*, 1689, oil on canvas mounted on wall, 1050 x 1250 cm., dome of the Cathedral of Puebla, Mexico. CONACULTA.-MEX. Reproduction authorized by Dirección General de Sitios y Monumentos del Patrimonio Cultural. (Photo: Rafael Doniz - Fomento Cultural Banamex, A.C.)