



2018.043

Unidentified Artist

*Our Lady of Remedies of La Paz*

Bolivia, probably La Paz

Eighteenth century

Oil on canvas, 16 ¾ x 12 inches

Inscription: *Vulnerunt Matrem meam, uod Judei non fecerunt...Verdadera efigie de la portentosa Ymagen de Nra. Sa. de los Remedios q se venera en la Yg. de Sn. Jn. De Dios en la Ciud. de La Paz, a la que un Jugador de dio de puñaladas; y este maldito vicio lo tuvo condenado a la perdición, la Blasfemia, la Embriaguez, la Deslealtad, la Embidia, la Soberbia, la Mentira, la Lujuria...la codicia, la avaricia, el Juramento...el Rencor, el Desasosiego, el perdim.to de la fe estas son los Pecados Mayores, los que cometio este miserable hombre y en suma, el conjunto de tantos depravimentos, como dice el Clericato, quantas esquinas tienen los Dados que son 48. De alli nace la perdida de la felicitud y Salud...y lo que es mas del Alma; y estos son los que del Ynfierno no claman...aunque este se hiso felis por su arrepentimiento.*

A number of representations of *Our Lady of Remedies of La Paz* are known, but this small painting is unusual in picturing a narrative account of a devotional image of the Virgin Mary being damaged by the blows of a dagger. The original image was in the church of the hospital

of Saint John of God in La Paz, Bolivia, named after the founder of the Brothers Hospitallers in Granada, Spain.

According to a pious tradition, the wounds that appeared on the image of the Virgin Mary A were caused by an attack by a corrupt gambler named Pedro Cañizares Pizarro. On seeing the image bleed, he is said to have undergone a profound religious conversion, even becoming an Augustinian priest.<sup>1</sup> The inscription emphasizes the moral and spiritual degradations (the Seven Deadly Sins) incurred by this heretical act. The legend ends well: "...he became happy through contrition." The small scale of this painting suggests that it was intended for a private viewer, perhaps one toying with the perils of gambling.

The style of the figures is somewhat naïve, but the energetic depiction of the narrative takes places within a balanced composition.



2022.68

Unidentified artist

*Our Lady of the Remedies of La Paz*

Bolivia, La Paz

Eighteenth century

Oil with gold on canvas, 30 1/3 x 23 1/4 in.

A second version of the subject in the Thoma collection is far more sophisticated, with naturalistically painted faces and an abundance of gold applied to the garments and the striking rays of light that surround the figures of Mary and the Christ Child. They are accompanied by Saint John of God, whose example of caring for the sick stimulated the founding of the Brothers

Hospitallers in Granada, Spain in 1572. The Archangel Raphael, considered the healing angel, appears on the right. The compositional similarity between the Thoma painting and one in the museum of Spanish colonial art in Buenos Aires, Argentina strongly suggests a common print source, though the unknown artists have varied the details considerably. Although much attention has been paid to European prints as compositional sources, the role of locally made prints that disseminated local religious devotions has been little studied.

Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt



Fig. 1. Unidentified Artist. *Our Lady of Remedies of La Paz with Saints John of God and Michael the Archangel*. Oil with gold on canvas, 33 1/8 x 25 inches. Buenos Aires: Museo de Arte Hispanoamericano "Isaac Fernández Blanco."

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<sup>i</sup> Gustavo Tudisco, "Our Lady of the Remedies of La Paz," in Suzanne Stratton-Pruitt, ed., *The Art of Painting in Colonial Bolivia/El arte de la pintura en la Bolivia colonial* (Philadelphia: Saint Joseph's University Press, 2017), pp. 427-29.