



2022.7
Unidentified artist
Our Lady of Chiquinquirá
Quito, Ecuador
1743
Oil and gold on silver
19.5 x 24 cm

This stunning work on silver showing the Virgin of Chiquinquirá (see also 2013.046 and 2014.020) and was given to Francisco José (or Joseph) de Figueredo y Victoria in 1743, during his tenure as Bishop of Popayán in thanks for his patronage of the Jesuit College of San Luis in Quito.

While the exact year of his birth is unknown, Figueredo was probably born in Popayán, an important colonial city along the trade route to Cartagena.¹ In 1707, Figueredo received his doctorate in Theology at the Jesuit College and Seminary of San Luis in Quito. It was likely his formation in a Jesuit college that endeared him to the Order. He served for over 20 years as a priest in the rural *doctrinas* of Toribio and Roldanillo, before returning to Popayán where he was appointed *maestrescuela* of the Cathedral in 1729.²

In 1741, Figueredo was appointed to Bishop of Popayán after the promotion of his predecessor, Diego Fermín de Vergara, to Archbishop of Bogotá. Figueredo was recommended to the post by Philip V's Jesuit confessor, P. Guillermo Clarke on account of his "literature, judgement, maturity, prudence, and charity, being very appropriate for the administration of this diocese due to his excellent qualities."³ His predecessor in the position, the Augustinian Vergara, was less convinced and wrote privately of Figueredo's many vices and his desire to secure a sinecure, perhaps Santa Fé de Bogotá or Quito. Vergara lamented that Figueredo's promotion, influenced by the Jesuits, saw him placed in a bishopric that desperately needed "apostolic zeal" (*celo apostólico*) to contain the scandal there.⁴ Some of Vergara's animus was directed at Figueredo as a creole (*criollo*) and native of Popayán, which made him a less desirable leader than a Peninsular.⁵ The concerns over Figueredo's character were echoed by the viceroy of Nueva Granada, Sebastián de Eslava, in a letter to the Cámara del Rey.

Despite Vergara and Eslava's reservations, Figueredo was formally appointed in Quito in February 1743 (perhaps the occasion on which he was given this painting).⁶ During his tenure as Bishop of Popayán, Figueredo conducted a visit of his diocese, repaired and enriched the Cathedral with sumptuous ornaments, expanded the archiepiscopal residence, established a hospital, and attempted to elevate the Jesuit college into a university. Though his term in office was not without scandal, Figueredo's ambitions were rewarded in 1751 when he was given the Archbishopric of Guatemala, again with assistance from the Jesuit Order.⁷ He remained in the office for the rest of his life.

Figueredo was unabashed in his promotion of the Jesuit order throughout his career, funneling over 40,000 pesos to them during his tenure in Guatemala alone. Some of these donations raised the suspicions of the Council of Indies.⁸ Figueredo died in office in 1765, and

¹ Some authors estimate he was born in 1684 or 85. See Luis Navarro García and Fernando Navarro Antolín, *Las dobles exequias del arzobispo Figueredo (1765): El canto del cisne de los jesuitas en Guatemala* (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2016), 19-20.

² Both towns are today located in the Department of Cauca in Colombia. See Navarro García and Navarro Antolín, *Las dobles exequias*, 21.

³ "literatura, juicio, madurez, prudencia y caridad, siendo muy a propósito para el gobierno de aquella diócesis por sus cabales prendas." Archivo General de Indias, Quito 581. Copia de carta confidencial del obispo de Popayán al secretario del Consejo de Indias Miguel Villanueva, 24 April 1741. Quoted in Navarro García and Navarro Antolín, *Las dobles exequias*, 23. My thanks to Erika Valdivieso for her comments on this translation.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁵ On notions of degeneracy among creoles, see Jorge Cañizares Esguerra, "New World, New Stars: Patriotic Astrology and the Invention of Indian and Creole Bodies in Colonial Spanish America, 1600-1650" *The American Historical Review* 104, no. 1 (1999): 33-68.

⁶ Navarro García and Navarro Antolín, *Las dobles exequias*, 30.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 39

⁸ Carmelo Saenz de Santamaria, "La vida económica del colegio de los jesuitas en Santiago de Guatemala," *Revista de Indias* 37 (1977): 556.

on his deathbed had himself ordained as a Jesuit.⁹ Unusually, funeral rites were held for Figueredo at both the Cathedral and Jesuit Church in Guatemala City, where Figueredo was interred. The Order also recorded and published manuscripts detailing these funerary celebrations in both Latin and Spanish.

The work that the Jesuit college of San Luis presented to Figueredo in 1743 is almost singular in its splendor; it is painted on silver with original silver frame featuring rococo detailing. While South America was awash in silver mined in Potosí, few paintings on silver from colonial Latin America have survived.¹⁰

Ill[ustrissi]mo Americani Celi Syderi.
Infulato Ecclesiae Principi, Popaianensis Diocesis Antistiti, Optimo Theologiae,
Et Sanctioris Disciplinae Doctori Millies Emerito.
Olim maioris Nunc Tantis Auspisiis Maximi Regii Ludovicei Collegii
Alumno Meritissimo, Jucundissimo Mecænati
Clariss[im]o D[octo]r D[on] FRANCISCO JOSEPHO DE FIGVEREDO
ET VICTORIA
Æternum Amoris Fidei, et obsequii Pignus Suo, et Collegii Evisdem nomine
M. Joannes Baraona, Convictorum Minimus Theologicas Hastheses.
D O C

Q D
Actus Liber Dei Est Realiter Ydentificat[us] cum Deo, Et defectibilis
Realiter Quoad Denominationem
In Colleg[i]o Max[imo]o Soc[ietatis] Jes[u] Preside, P. Josepho, Sola
Theologiae Magistro.
Die. 10 Mensis. Anno MDCCXXXIII¹¹

The inscription on the reverse of the panel praises Figueredo in the highest terms, referring to him as the “brightest star of the American sky” and “a most distinguished doctor of moral and sacred theology, who earned his title a thousand times over.” It also notes Figueredo’s patronage of the College, which was perhaps increased after such a sumptuous gift, as the Jesuits sought to further cultivate their relationship with an alumnus holding an important ecclesiastical position.

The painting, which features the bold reds and blues of Quito painting, follows the typical iconography of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá. At left stands St. Anthony of Padua holding a book on which stands the Christ Child. The lily he often holds has been transmuted here into a martyr’s palm rendered in gold, a feature found in other versions of Our Lady of Chiquinquirá. At right stands St. Andrew holding up his eponymous cross and reading from a book. At the center is the Virgin, holding the Christ Child, on whose fingers rests a red songbird. In her other hand she holds a scepter as two putti swoop down to crown her. The figures all have large eyes, a feature found in some examples of Quito painting

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ One work from the Denver Art Museum bears mentioning, a portrait miniature on silver. Unknown artist, Portrait of a Lady, about 1770. Oil paint on silver sheet with gilt silver frame; Framed 3½ × 2¾ in. Denver Art Museum.

¹¹ Transcription and translation by Erika Valdivieso.

According to legend the original painting showing the Virgin flanked by Saints Anthony of Padua and Andrew was commissioned by the *encomendero* (landowner) Antonio de Santana from the Spanish artist Alonso de Narváez (d. 1583) in Tunja. Narváez created the work on a length of cotton cloth known as a *manta*. Upon its completion, Santana installed the painting on an altar in a chapel where over time it was damaged by moisture. After his death, Santana's widow moved to Chiquinquirá, taking the painting with her. There, it attracted the devotion of a local woman who prayed fervently for its restoration. In 1586, her prayers were answered when the painting miraculously appeared with its original colors restored.

The Virgin of Chiquinquirá became one of the most significant Marian advocations in Nueva Granada, now Colombia, where it remains an important devotion. Figueredo was particularly dedicated to the miraculous image, making a pilgrimage to visit it during his years as a rural cleric: "A él [Chiquinquirá] fue el Sr. Figueredo atropellando incomodidades de caminos cuando era cura, y aumentó las riquezas de la imagen, cuyo retrato nunca aparto de sí, y cuyo nombre siempre se oyó en sus labios con ternura e incendios del corazón. Así, con la leche de esta devoción de María, vivió ángel y murió, porque era hombre."¹² The Virgin would indeed feature in Juan José Sacrameña's funerary program for Figueredo, as the 23rd *tarja* and accompanied by a Spanish poem (*décima*) and the Latin motto: "Lac, salus et vita" (milk, health and life).¹³

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¹² Juan Joseph Sacrameña, *Lágrimas de las dos Américas...* (Mexico: Impreso del Real, y mas Antiguo Colegio de S. Ildefonso de Mexico, 1766), 33. Quoted in Navarro García and Navarro Antolín, *Las dobles exequias*, 182. This devotion was also recorded in Manuel Cantabrana's *Lamento lúgubre* (Mexico, 1766); see Navarro García and Navarro Antolín, 223-24.

¹³ Navarro García and Navarro Antolín, *Las dobles exequias*, 96.