



Toward the end of the year 1700's, in the region of Cota (southeast of Quillacoco), lived a humble family of peasants who earned a living thanks to a small herd of goats entrusted to the care of their youngest daughter. The girl went each day to the lower hills of the area, crossing the Sapinku river, where water and grasses were found in abundance to nourish her flock.

On a beautiful sunny day of August, as the girl was watching over her flock and entertaining herself near the river, a Lady holding a beautiful Child in her arms appeared to her. She began to speak to the shepherd girl in Quechua, their native language and from this day forward, the two met in the hills and held long conversations while the shepherd girl herded her sheep and played with the little boy. This caused the girl to lose track of time and she would return home later than usual.

After this had happened numerous times, her parents began to worry. When they asked her why she was arriving late so often, she told them about the lady and the boy, whom she called "*la mamita*" (the little mother). This caused her parents to become suspicious, so over the next few days they went to the hills each day to see if she was telling the truth. Soon, the Lady and the Child appeared once more to the girl so she ran to find her parents and some of the elders and the priest of the town and brought them back to the hills. The Virgin, in the meantime, raised herself up and got on top of the hill of the mountain.

When she returned with her parents and the priest, the girl saw that the woman and child were already at the top of the hill. She pointed to them and shouted, "*jaqayman, urqupiña, urqupiña!*". In Quechua "*urqu*" means "*hill*" and "*piña*" means "*already*", meaning she is already on the hill.

When they were just about to reach the top of the hill, the lady and her child suddenly vanished but they caught a glimpse of a seemingly celestial being disappearing into the trees. They ran back to town and the priest called all of the villagers and town leaders to meet at the place where she had disappeared. Meanwhile, in the field where the Virgin Mary had appeared, a beautiful statue was discovered of a Lady with Child that was named the Virgin Mary of Urkupiña." and it was carried in procession. Over time, seeing the miracles that occurred, in that same spot the people built a small chapel dedicated to the Virgin. Afterward, the miraculous image was transferred to the Shrine of San Idefonso in Quillacollo, which is an annual pilgrimage destination for many coming from all over Bolivia and from the rest of South America.