



Our Lady of the Pillar

The word '*pilar*' in the Spanish language means pillar. According to tradition on January 2, 40 A.D., the Virgin Mary appeared to the Apostle James in a sheltered place near the banks of the river Ebro.

James was disappointed by the ineffectiveness of his preaching. After a long journey from Palestine to Spain, the apostle, tired and defiant with a pressing desire to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all, entrusted his discouragement to prayer. It was in this context that a miracle happened before his eyes.

Enveloped in a dazzling light, the Virgin Mary, still alive in the East, appeared in a bilocation, surrounded by hosts of angels intoning hymns to God.

Mary, had been sent personally to the Iberian Peninsula by Divine Grace to provide spiritual support and to hearten the Apostle James assuring him of the success of his evangelizing mission.

Our Lady also gives him as a tangible sign, a column that appeared prodigiously with her (the pillar on which she placed her feet), recommending that he build a temple in her honour for the conversion, healing and salvation of those who sought refuge.

Mary confirmed to the Apostle James that Jesus himself had ordered that the angels should bring the Pillar to that particular place for the building of the Marian sanctuary, capable of accomplishing wonders for all those who in the following centuries would invoke the Most Holy Name of Mary.

The Virgin finally promised that the Column would remain standing until the end of the world and that the name of Jesus would always be venerated in that city. The Pillar was placed by St. James, (still standing in the same place today_ and has become the first highly venerated stone around which the Marian Shrine of Zaragoza was built.

It is a material sign in the succession of epochs that followed, that the spiritual support in the Church, founded by Jesus Christ, is secure, with the help of Mary, Mother of the Church.