

# *Garabandal*

*The Time Has Come!*

*High hopes for the Church and the world*



**Santiago Lanús**

**Reflections by Fr. Justo A. Lofeudo**

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# The Time Has Come!

## Santiago Lanús

"I give you a piece of advice: Pray and make others pray because the world is at the beginning of its perdition. They don't believe in you or in your talks with the Lady in White; they'll do it when it's too late."

***Letter from Father Pío to the seer girls of Garabandal.***

***Father Javier Escalada, in an audience with the Holy Father Paul VI, asked him if he could spread the messages of Garabandal and told him that there was a lot of opposition to them. The Pope said:***

"It doesn't matter, tell those people that it is the Pope who wants that these messages be made public with utmost urgency." And then he continued: "It's the most beautiful story of Humanity since the Birth of Christ. It is like the second life of the Blessed Virgin on earth, and there are no words to thank her."

"May God reward you for all your work, especially for the deep love with which you are making known the events related to Garabandal. May the message of the Mother of God be received in hearts before it is too late. As an expression of joy and gratitude, the Holy Father wishes to impart his Apostolic Blessing".

***Letter of His Holiness John Paul II to the writer Albert Weber.***

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## FOREWORD

"I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned and revealed them to little children." (Matt 11: 25)

In Garabandal, the Blessed Virgin Mary reveals what is most important to be known: the current state of the Church and the world, but above all the REMEDY: two MESSAGES.

Every single thing in Garabandal is a sign containing living doctrine and teachings.

At present, we are living the time of the great apostasy in the Church – the evidence is within sight – due to the lack of attention to the messages of Our Heavenly Mother. Our Lady was right and the four girls courageously transmitted her message. Nevertheless, her presence among us comes from much earlier than Garabandal, and La Salette, Fatima, Amsterdam are just some examples.

In Garabandal the four girls have with the Blessed Virgin Mary a familiar and affectionate relationship. They learned from her teachings how to have an intimate and spiritual in daily life with God.

Garabandal stands as a huge and mysterious treasure, a great hope for the Church and for the world: It was time for Him to leave his "manger". Thank God and owing to the great work carried out online, Garabandal is already well known worldwide, especially in Marian groups and to those who love our Heavenly Mother and who want to know all about Her.

Now we are witnessing a public and shocking event with the movie "Garabandal, Only God Knows", which has had a large crowd of spectators in the countries where it has been already released. In Spain, more than 38,000 people has already seen it while in Mexico the number is reaching 100,000. The film will be released in Argentina and in other countries of Central and South America as well as in the United States, Portugal and other European countries and the rest of the world. According to the producer, the movie has been requested from 34 countries!

Without doubt, it is Our Heavenly Mother the one who heartily wishes to get her messages through before it is too late, as Father Pío told the girls.

We are also at the doors of the great events the messages describe and the main purpose they have: CONVERSION, to turn our eyes to God, to the sacraments, to the importance and value of the greatest treasure our Church has: the Blessed Sacrament, the real and living presence of Jesus Christ on earth. Moreover, the hour of the wish of our beloved Pope St. John Paul is also coming: the new great Evangelization and the civilization of love.

This book intends to be a complement to the film and to present the story of Garabandal in a simple and straightforward way. Although it may appear brief at the beginning, great priority is given to the eyewitnesses' testimonies of the of the events mentioned there.

These testimonies have thoroughly been studied and give evidence of radical changes in their own lives. "By their fruits you will recognize them" (Mt. 7:16).

In addition, we have included some reflections concerning the message of Garabandal written by Father Justo Antonio Lofeudo, a missionary of the Blessed Sacrament, who helps to open chapels of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration throughout Europe. Father Justo is also a scholar of the apparitions, especially those of Garabandal and Medjugorje, and he has interviewed some witnesses and has visited these places several times.

We have also added Mr. Rafael Jardón Méndez (1946-2011)'s deep texts. He was a great Apostle of Garabandal and the creator of the online portal [www.virgendegarabandal.net](http://www.virgendegarabandal.net), currently administered by his brother and with more than 27,000,000 visits from the 5 continents.

Besides, Garabandal stands as the living proclamation that we are all moving towards a personal encounter with God. This book aims at helping us prepare to receive great Graces; and the way to do this is by practicing what our Mother preached in Garabandal: "Live the messages!". It is useless to believe in the apparitions, to know a lot about the prophesied events, if we do not comply with what they command. Everything about Garabandal is nothing but a great reminder of what the Church has always taught us.

God grant that this book be an instrument to help us deeply love the Two Sacred Hearts, the true Church of Jesus Christ and may also inspire us to live the messages to the fullest.

#### **SOME REFERENCE WEB PAGES:**

##### **Websites in Spanish:**

[www.virgendegarabandal.com](http://www.virgendegarabandal.com)   [www.garabandal.it](http://www.garabandal.it)

Online radio "Pueblo de Maria". It transmits 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

[www.pueblodemaria.com](http://www.pueblodemaria.com)

##### **Facebook:**

[www.facebook.com/pueblodemaria](https://www.facebook.com/pueblodemaria)

**WhatsApp broadcast list of "Pueblo de Maria". Send "Alta" by WhatsApp to the following number:**

+5491139004775

## PERSONAL TESTIMONY

The following few pages give a personal and detailed account of how I got to know Garabandal and the first time I visited the town. It was the year 1979 and one day while I was walking home from school - located in San Isidro, Buenos Aires - I stopped at a kiosk to buy chocolate. As I was making up my mind, I was suddenly approached by an old lady, who turned out to be a classmate's French grandmother. The charming old lady started talking out of the blue about some girls who had seen the Blessed Virgin in a small town in Spain in the middle of nowhere. She was undeniably taking advantage of my attention, which was nothing but the perplexity between what I was listening to and what I was thinking about. That is to say, how I could get rid of that uncomfortable situation and get home as soon as possible in order to play football with the neighborhood kids.

The lady had already been talking nonstop for about 15 or 20 minutes until my patience said enough and I said goodbye as politely as I could and headed home.

"Coincidentally", the following days the lady's grandson and I started gradually to become good friends. Consequently, I began going to his house more often in order to play ping-pong and also to do some homework. Nevertheless, those visits had sometimes a "cost" since his grandmother, as soon as she saw the opportunity, harassed me with that story that seemed to me so strange and far away both in time and space.

I cannot remember how much time had gone by, maybe a month or two, until the lady's story finally caught my full attention. I no longer went to my friend's house just to see him, but to have the opportunity to listen to his grandmother talking about those heavenly stories that had begun to conquer my heart. I remember that once I went to my friend's house so as to attend to a party together and, of course, went a few minutes earlier to speak to his grandmother. But, when it was high time to leave, I told my friend to go first promising him I would join him later. It would have been 4 or 5 a.m. when my friend returned home. To his surprise, I was still there with his grandma having our own "party" and enjoying the stories about those four girls who were to me no longer strangers but close acquaintances.

Some events cannot be humanly explained. They just happen. But in a life-course perspective and after many years, these circumstances do have a clear and simple explanation for me. Our Heavenly Mother has providentially used this lovely lady and her grandson to catch not only my undivided attention but also my heart to make me focus on what would then turn into the most important passion of my life: our Most Holy Mother and her appearance in Garabandal.

As soon as I finished high school I spent almost a year discerning a possible vocation to religious life. I first thought of becoming a Trappist monk. Thus, I went to make a fifteen-day experience at the Trappist monastery in Azul, Buenos Aires Province but a week later I was back home.

Then, the possibility of discerning God's call to priesthood emerged. In 1981, I entered in the seminary of my Diocese along with 20 potential candidates. It was the most numerous class of students ever, a total of 65 seminarians. Unfortunately, that seminary is struggling with low enrollments and many of its former seminarians who had begun with me and were later ordained priests, do not longer exercise the ministry these days.

I spent three unforgettable years in that seminary until God, through a rather painful inner circumstance, clearly showed me that my vocation was not to the priesthood. When I finally left I looked for consolation, a word that would enlighten me. Short after I called a Spanish friend of mine named Rafael, whom I will refer to later in this book. He told me something prophetic: "The Blessed Virgin wants you free from direct obedience, especially for times to come, so that you can work freely for her". I was terribly confused at the time, but later on I understood quite well. The testimony of many priests I met in the apostolate also helped me understand Rafael's words and the fact that it was difficult for them to talk about Garabandal if their bishop or superior did not believe in the apparitions. I even met several of priests who had to remain silent due to obedience. I want to make it clear that I am never going to question that course of action because the Blessed Virgin herself emphasized in Garabandal there were going to be many cases of disbelief among priests and bishops, especially when she once told the girls they had to obey the bishop before obeying her.

This gives me the opportunity to tell something that happened to me in the seminary and that confirms my friend's prophetic words:

After the first months in the seminary, where one is like a sponge that absorbs everything that is taught, I started talking about Garabandal. I began by telling my roommate and other seminars about the apparitions. Eventually, after talking non-stop, the story become fairly famous. Consequently, I had to transform my room in a sort of "center" where I passed slides with the images of the ecstasies while revealing details of the apparitions.

Nevertheless, it was one seminarian who was completely hooked on Garabandal. I remember once when we asked for permission to go out and visit a priest every time he was in Buenos Aires. As soon as this man of God welcomed us warmly, we started talking about the story of Garabandal for hours. In 2016 I met this seminarian, who is now a bishop, inside the Basilica of St. Peter in the Vatican on the occasion of the canonization of Cura Brochero. He immediately recognized me and said: "Look where we meet again!" and then asked me what I was doing there. When I answered I was coming from Garabandal, he instantly replied: "You are still promoting the messages of Garabandal!" Unfortunately, we could not continue talking as he had to greet many people, but I am convinced that conversation will continue someday.

In my third year at the seminary, the rector called me to tell me that I should not continue talking about Garabandal arguing that I was not there to "instruct, but to be instructed." Honestly at that moment that did not bother me at all and because I wanted to obey, I decided to shut up. I was already thinking of leaving the seminary and soon after that I left. After some years, in 1986, I met the rector in Assisi, in the famous and questioned

interreligious meeting called by our beloved Pope John Paul II. I had gone to Assisi with the sole intention of fulfilling the promise I had made to my grandmother. I had promised to call her from there because she, who had once been a German Lutheran, had converted in Assisi in front of the tomb of St. Francis thanks to a German bishop who had told her the story of the Saint because he had unexpectedly heard her speaking in their mother tongue.

The rector of the seminary was doing a course in Rome, prior to his appointment as bishop, and when I saw me the first thing he said was: "every time they talk to me about an apparition I remember you". And at that moment I realized I had planted a seed. Once out of the seminar, I had a short break with everything related to Garabandal but deep inside I was already "free" and my desire to know the town grew quite fast.

Soon I started dating a very good and practicing Catholic girl, but when I wanted to share the story of Garabandal with her, I found nothing but coldness and indifference. As "Garabandal" continue growing in my heart I finally decided to repress it. We dated for many years because we loved each other very much; but I felt like a volcano inside me and I wanted to share it with her. However, this desire was not mutual and, finally, we broke up.

Something similar happened with my family. Except for one brother, nobody wanted to hear about Garabandal, no one was interested in it and even some of them thought he had some kind of obsession. This is what my mother especially thought until decades later after having listened to my testimony in a meeting, she finally understood till the point of accompanying me to Garabandal more than six times. Today she helps me a lot in this apostolate.

The time to visit the town of Garabandal for the first time finally arrived. The excuse was a trip to Europe with two friends. In 1986, I flew to France, rented a car and went to Toulouse to pick up my friend's grandmother who had once again returned to France. Together we started a journey whose final destination was nowhere else but Garabandal and we decided to go there from Lourdes.

When we arrived, it was very late at night. We stayed at Maximina's house, Conchita's aunt and godmother, who gave me a room next to the dining room. As soon as I was there, she told me that the girls and the Blessed Virgin had spent time in that room in several occasions. And with that thought in my mind, I slept peacefully all night long. The following morning, I woke up very early and I went alone to the Pines and after praying I went up the mountain. Suddenly, I saw a shepherd coming down with his sheep and we started a conversation. He first asked me where I was from and if I was there because of the Blessed Virgin. This gave me the opportunity to ask him if he had lived all that and he said he had and we continued talking for an hour about countless anecdotes and stories of the apparitions of which he had been a privileged witness. Those days felt like being in paradise. Furthermore, Garabandal has a special natural charm that triggers spiritual contemplation and, consequently, falling in love with its geographical nature is not difficult at all.

After a few days I became very close to Jaime and Deli who invited me to stay with them. This couple was from Gijón and used to spend long periods in their house in Garabandal. We prayed the Holy Rosary, talked about the Blessed Virgin and Jaime invited many of the locals that had witnessed the apparitions. Many of these were related to the girls and Jaime encouraged them to tell me what they had experienced.

After some time, I became aware of the providential nature of those visits as the Virgin was guiding me towards what my Spanish friend, Rafael, had predicted when I left the seminary. I was destined to work for our Most Holy Mother by sharing what was already overflowing in my heart.

Many years went by and many were the circumstances and the struggles I went through and from which I learned a lot.

There were also missionary trips, many people, priests and consecrated persons that helped me become a small instrument in the Virgin's hands.

May God and the Blessed Virgin Mary bless you.

Santiago Lanús

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Santiago Lanús

"Pueblo de María"

[www.pueblodemaria.com](http://www.pueblodemaria.com)

[www.virgendegarabandal.com](http://www.virgendegarabandal.com)

## SAN SEBASTIAN DE GARABANDAL: THE STORY

June 18, 1961 is a Sunday afternoon and four girls - Conchita, Mari Loli, Mari Cruz and Jacinta - from the small village of San Sebastian de Garabandal (Cantabria, Spain) are looking for a "little adventure" while stealing some apples from their schoolmaster's apple tree. The tree is at the edge of the town, at the beginning of a steep and stony road known as the 'calleja' (country road) which goes up to the mountain, towards the lands where their parents and the girls themselves work hard in cattle ranches to earn their bread. Shortly afterwards, with the apples still in their hands, a thunder makes them shudder. It is really strange as there are no clouds in the sky... Thus, their conscience begins reproaching them and, feeling sorry for their mischief, they regret what they have done.

Suddenly, the unexpected takes place. Conchita falls to her knees, motionless. The rest of the girls are scared thinking that something bad will happen to them. They want to run away and ask for help, but they also fall to the ground along with Conchita. **Out of the blue an Angel appears before them. They will later discover that it was St. Michael the Archangel.**

He says nothing, and the girls do not dare to say or to ask anything as well. When they come to their senses, they find themselves alone in the calleja. The experience has been so astonishing that they feel overwhelmed by a mixture of confusion, emotion and fear. Then, they run to seek refuge behind the parish church in order to shed their tears. This was just the beginning of a series of events which have radically changed their lives and have marked thousands of people's existence.

During the following days the Archangel visited the girls. From day to day the visitors multiplied, coming from the farthest places.

**Finally, on July 2, the feast of the Visitation, the girls saw the Most Blessed Virgin for the first time. She appeared with the Child Jesus and two angels.** The girls recognized one of the angels as St. Michael, the angel who had been already appearing to them, and the other one seemed to be identical to him. The girls began to talk to the Virgin with confidence, without any fear. **This will be one of the main characteristics of Garabandal: the close relationship between the Blessed Virgin - the true Mother - and the girls.**

When Our Lady said she had to leave, the little girls begged her to stay. In order to comfort them, she promised she would return the following day. And so she did, but not only the next day as she appeared in countless occasions, sometimes during the day and sometimes at night.

The apparitions of Our Lady of Garabandal took place throughout four years, during which she gave the girls two messages to be made public: the first one was received on October 18, 1961 and the second on June 18, 1965. In this last apparition, the Virgin Mary defined herself as: **"I'm your Mother". That is her "title" in Garabandal: Our Mother.**

Moreover, on July 18, 1962, numerous witnesses watched astounded how the Holy Host that Conchita was receiving from the hands of the Angel became visible on the girl's tongue. This event was later known as the **"Miracle of Visible Host"**. The Most Blessed Virgin also announced, through the girls, the accomplishment of a series of events -**the Warning, the Miracle and the Chastisement**- that, coming from the love of God, aim at

moving us to a deep conversion. Doctors, and witnesses in general, have proved several times the **amazing physical phenomena** that accompanied the ecstasies.

**The apparitions ended on November 13, 1965.** Only Conchita was called to climb to the pines in the rain, without witnesses. The Virgin spoke to Conchita with words full of maternal affection: "Tell me, Conchita, tell me about my children! I carry all of them under my cloak ... I love all of you very much, and I want your salvation." Conchita felt so happy that she wanted the Blessed Virgin to take her with her. But the Lady explained to her: "When you present yourself before God, you have to show him your hands full of the works you have done on behalf of your brothers and for the glory of God. And at this moment your hands are empty".

Thus, the visible manifestations of Our Mother in Garabandal came to an end. Later, Conchita explained: "They left my soul full of peace and joy, and of a great desire to overcome my shortcomings and to love the Lord and his Blessed Mother with all my strength." **These are the same effects Our Mother of Heaven wants to instill in the souls of all her children:** the certainty of having a very close Mother who watches over us; the desire for conversion that emerges in the soul that meditates the Passion; the love and the veneration for the most precious treasure that the Church possesses: the Eucharist. The Virgin Mary, Our Mother, promises to us what she promised to Conchita in the last apparition: **"I will always be with you and with all my children."**

## The girls

**Conchita González, Jacinta González, Mari Loli Mazón and Mari Cruz González** are the protagonists of our story. The four girls were born in San Sebastián de Garabandal. Despite having similar surnames, they are surprisingly not related. At the time the apparitions Conchita, Jacinta and Mari Loli were twelve years old, while Mari Cruz was only eleven.

Until June 18, 1961, that is when the phenomena began, they had not differentiated themselves from the rest of children in any way. Like everyone else in the town, the girls attended school every morning to have classes with Mrs. Serafina. Being Garabandal an agricultural and cattle town, when the girls left school they also helped their parents in farm. They took care of the sheep, collected grass for the cows or wood for the stoves. And, like rest of the children, the girls attended mass and catechism with their parish priest, Father Valentín, and they recited poems to the Bless Virgin in the month of May... In short, **they were ordinary girls: nice, playful, hardworking and of healthy habits. They were very young and with a clean and innocent look in their eyes.** At that time, Garabandal was without telephone line or television, and the road was nothing but a steep path of dirt.

Soon after the girls started experiencing the first ecstasies, there appeared **priests and doctors** determined to prove the truth or falsehood of the apparitions. **They could verify that these girls were perfectly healthy and balanced, without any desire for greatness.**

The ecclesiastics made their inquiries at a theological and doctrinal level, and examined the girl's lives. They also realized that throughout the time the apparitions had taken place, **the girls had complied with all their obligations both at school and at home** despite the fact that the apparitions had kept them awake until the wee hours of the morning and at

the mercy of harsh weather conditions such as rain, cold or snow. The Blessed Virgin often told them to be obedient to their parents. She also encouraged them to make sacrifices, especially for the holiness of priests so that those priests who waver might persevere.

Our Lady taught them to have horror of sin, helping them to form their conscience and answering the thousand questions the girls asked her.

The girls affirmed that after seeing the Blessed Virgin Mary they yearned to love Jesus and Mary even more and to tell everyone about the Lord and his Most Holy Mother. The simple and trusting relationship that the little girls had with their Heavenly Mother was truly exceptional. **In certain occasions, she played with the girls and she often said good-bye to them with a kiss.**

The doctors who carried out the investigations verified with astonishment the strange physical phenomena that accompanied the ecstasies. During these, the insensitivity to pain was total, even when they were pricked with needles or burned with cigarettes. In addition, their bodies acquired an extraordinary weight that made them impossible to lift or move. Their open eyes did not react to the light of powerful bulbs or photographic flashes while the girls contemplated the apparitions. They ran towards the place of their vision, arriving before anyone else, even before strong and trained young people, without any sign of physical effort. In contrast, the others arrived sweating and feeling as if they were drowning. Moreover, the girls fell on their knees crashing onto the rocks without hurting themselves. They also walked in ecstasy backwards and forwards through the badly cobbled streets or even cross country, with their heads fully raised, their eyes fixed towards the sky all the time and without seeing where they were going and without falling or tripping. Furthermore, they returned to their owners the hundreds of objects the Virgin kissed in each apparition without making mistakes. And there were also cases of physical and spiritual healing as well as remarkable conversions. **In Garabandal, the Our Lady seems to be specialized in healing hearts and souls.**

**A lot has been said about the girls' "denials".** Interestingly, the Virgin had warned them long before these would occur, and they had not been able to believe it at that time. "How on Earth are we going to deny you if we are looking at you right now?", they had told the Blessed Virgin confidently. **Little did they know of the inner darkness through which the Lord purifies souls and strengthens their work. Perhaps they did not know how to measure their strength, that of four poor village girls, before the overwhelming pressure of so many people whom they respected and wanted to obey.** Expert theologians who have studied the phenomena of Garabandal assert that instead of negations we should talk about "momentary hesitations" which, on the other hand, are perfectly comprehensible given the situation the girls were going through. **Based on concrete and real facts witnessed and studied by many people, these weak hesitations cannot be used as a solid argument to judge the phenomena.**

As they grew older, the four girls left their hometown, got married and had children. On April 20, 2009, Mari Loli was 59 years old when she died due to "lupus erythematosus" in the respiratory system. Many may have been surprised by the fact that neither of the girls consecrated themselves to God as religious women. This shows once again that we are all called to holiness irrespective of the state of life chosen by God. **In this respect, the appearances of Garabandal go hand in hand with the doctrine of the Second Vatican**

**Council that -almost contemporary in dates- proclaimed the universal call to holiness in all the ways of life (Cf. LG cap. V).**

## **The Messages**

**The day to day events of Garabandal comprise in themselves a whole message. With the simplicity of a mother, the Blessed Virgin found the key to the girls' hearts.** She talks to them and gives them confidence so that they can express themselves and tell her their problems. And taking advantage of these dialogues, she teaches them, plays with them and corrects them when necessary. Our Heavenly Mother is a Mother. **And, by having this close relationship with the girls, she teaches us to treat her as our mother.**

In each place where Our Lady appears, she does it under a specific advocacy: in Lourdes she is the "Immaculate Conception"; in Fatima, "Our Lady of the Rosary"; to Saint Catherine Laboure she appears as "Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal"... In Garabandal, Our Mother comes as: "I, your Mother". **That is her title: "Our Mother".**

Nevertheless, the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin in Garabandal have another characteristic: **she has a good relationship not only to the "girls", but also to the audience witnessing the apparitions.** Conchita pointed out once that, on many occasions, she felt as if Mother were not looking or smiling just at them, but at those who were behind her, the witnesses of the apparitions.

In fact, in the last apparition, Our Mother told one of the girls: "Conchita, I do not come only for you, but for all my children". These witnesses had a great role during the ecstasies: **the Blessed Virgin seemed determined that, all those who climbed to Garabandal would receive a sign, a proof of her holy presence.** The testimonies in this regard are as many as the number of spectators witnessing the apparitions.

**Furthermore, Our Lady announced in two precise moments very specific messages the girls had to make public.** On several occasions, through official episcopal reports, the Bishops of Santander have stated that the messages of the Blessed Virgin in Garabandal were "important" and "theologically correct". **The first one** was issued four months after the beginning of the apparitions, on **October 18, 1961.** The heavy rain, which did not stop during the whole day, did not discourage the thousands of people who had arrived to Garabandal. At dusk, in the pines, the girls gathered to read the following message:

***"We must make many sacrifices, do much penance, and visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently. But first, we must lead good lives. If we do not, a Chastisement will befall us. The cup is already filling up, and if we do not change, a severe Chastisement will come upon us."***

With the simplicity of a mother, Our Lady gave her children the instructions they needed to hear for the well-being of their souls. If we do not take the way of the Cross, if the Eucharist is not the center of our lives and of each of our days, if we are not good, if we do not convert, the Lord will have no choice but to intervene so that we understand the importance of what is at stake: our own salvation.

The **second message** of Our Heavenly Mother came shortly before the end of the apparitions, **on June 18, 1965**. Saint Michael the Archangel was in charge of communicating to Conchita the message from the Blessed Virgin. Tears rolled down the girl's face as she talked:

***As my message of October 18th has not been fulfilled and has not been made known to the world, I tell you that this is my last message. Before, the cup was filling up. Now, it is overflowing. Many cardinals, many bishops, and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them. Less and less importance is being given to the Eucharist. You should turn the wrath of God away from yourselves by your efforts. If you ask for His forgiveness with sincere hearts, He will forgive you. I, your Mother, through the intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel, ask you to amend your lives. You are now receiving the last warnings. I love you very much and do not want your condemnation. Pray to us with sincerity, and we will grant your requests. You should make more sacrifices. Meditate on the passion of Jesus.***

The message - brief in words - was really long in content and did nothing but to describe the painful situation that the Catholic Church was going through at the end of the Second Vatican Council. But, on June 18, 1965, Conchita could not know what was happening as the acute doctrinal and priestly crisis that was beginning to break out in the bosom of the Church was barely known in Spain, and in that lost village it could not even have been imagined. And yet, it would soon become a source of deep suffering, and even scandal, for the whole Church.

## The Prophecies

Undoubtedly, one of the aspects of Garabandal that has created a lot of talk and about which it has been speculated the most are **the prophecies communicated by the Blessed Virgin to the girls: the Warning, the Miracle and the Chastisement**. Already in the first message, made public on October 18, 1961, the Blessed Virgin warned us: ***"The cup is already filling up, and if we do not change, a severe Chastisement will come upon us."*** But that night, the crowd soaked by the persistent rain, which did not stop the whole day, and disappointed after many hours of waiting, barely attended the meeting of Our Mother, which was communicated the girl's trembling lips.

Little by little, throughout 1962 and as the Virgin gave them permission, the girls continued making the information known to the public. Conchita stated that ***"(The Virgin) had told me that God was going to make a great Miracle, and that there would be no doubt that it was a Miracle. It will come directly from God without human intervention. Everyone would see that it comes directly from God"***.

**Before that great "Miracle", there will be a supernatural "Warning" that will prepare us.** The girls said that "It will be a terrible experience, but it will be for the well-being of our souls because we will see our inner self, in our conscience, the good and the evil we have done. God desires our salvation; the purpose of the Warning is not to cause us to fear but to bring us closer to Him and to increase our faith.

**But, if after these two great divine interventions - the Warning and the Miracle - humanity does not change, a "Chastisement" will come upon us.** It will come for our good and it will

come for our conversion, but the girls affirmed: "The Chastisement, if we do not change, will be horrible." Conchita, Jacinta and Loli saw it, but the Blessed Virgin did not let them describe it. The intensity of the Chastisement is closely related to the response we give to the Warning and the Miracle.

The Warning, the Miracle and the Chastisement have a very clear goal: to move to conversion, to change lives, to accomplish what Our Mother stated in her first message: "We have to be very good." Nevertheless, they are not independent from the messages that Our Lady gives in Garabandal. There are many who, at of curiosity, strive to know when these events will take place and what they will consist of. But **what is really important is to live the messages from now on**, and to do what Our Mother asked: strive for our own conversion and spiritual growth through prayer and penance, meditation on the Passion, intensification of the Eucharistic life... We all have a great deal at stake here as **all depends on the spiritual state we have upon the occurrence of the Warning, the Miracle and the Chastisement**. The same sun that softens the wax hardens the mud. Notwithstanding some people will shed tears of repentance and love, others will precipitate into the abyss of a blinding hatred against God.

**The Warning, the miracle and the Chastisement have their origin in the depths of the merciful Heart of God, and they must be received with immense gratitude.**

#### State of the official studies on Garabandal

**Fr. Valentín Marichalar Torres was the parish priest of San Sebastián de Garabandal** when, on June 18, 1961, some neighbors came unexpectedly to tell him that four girls from the town-Conchita, Jacinta, Mari Cruz and Mari Loli-had seen an angel. Therefore, the good priest spoke to the girls, especially the first days as soon as the ecstasies had ended.

Father Valentín was impressed by the fact that despite their young age and that they did not know what the questions were going to be, the little ones did not contradict each other when they answered his inquiries. It had only been three days since the first apparition when Fr. Valentin had already gathered enough data to make an official report to the Bishopric, where **he regularly began to send detailed reports pertaining to what was happening in his beloved parish.**

**The diocesan curia from the first moment set aside the supernaturality of the events of Garabandal.** However, due to the expectation that had been created around the girls, a commission was appointed to study the facts. The promptness with which this task was carried out can be deduced by observing the date of the first official document, which then used to support the report drafted by the Commission.

**On August 26, 1961, just two months after the phenomena had begun** – the girls declared the Archangel's first appearance had taken place on June 18, 1961– **the first episcopal report was published** stating that: "Nothing up to the present makes us affirm the supernatural nature of the events that occurred in Garabandal". **At that time, there were still very few elements of judgment and the request for prudence was understandable.** The messages had not yet been communicated; no statement had been taken to the girls or their relatives, not even to the parish priest. Hence, there had not been material time to check the spiritual fruits that would later occur...

The problem was that, in practice, the investigation ended there, even if only occasionally the Commission sent some other document to the Bishopric. The conclusions regarding Garabandal were already drawn that first summer, without devoting the necessary time to study what was really happening in the village. And consequently, the successive official statement always referred to the first report and to its very first line. To make things worse, the Commission's reports were never made public, so the grounds supporting their negative assessment remain unknown.

Therefore, both this first Commission and its reports cannot be taken into account arises from the fact that Monsignor Juan Antonio del Val Gallo - who, before being appointed bishop, had been part of the first Commission - created in 1989 **a second Commission which, unfortunately, did nothing but repeat the mistakes and the conclusions of the first one.** This second commission operated in such an absolute "secrecy" that its members' names were not made public. And, to make matters worse, it did not take statements neither from the alleged seers nor from the most authorized witnesses. Upon the conclusion of the study, not even one official report was ever published about it.

The Diocese of Santander has always affirmed that it has not found anything against the faith of the Church in the doctrinal content of the apparitions of San Sebastián de Garabandal. This is certainly of utmost importance here. As for the phenomena, it has been determined the events at Garabandal were "Non constat de supernaturalitate", meaning that the case is neither close nor condemned, according to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Nonetheless, the witnesses still have no explanation as to why "there is no evidence of the supernatural nature" of some events that they have themselves experienced and for which they do not find a logical explanation.

What does "Non constat de supernaturalitate" mean? It is a key concept to understand the situation of Garabandal. Faced with a presumed appearance and after rigorous discernment, the Church is able to pronounce itself in any of these ways:

1. "Constat de supernaturalitate" means that the apparition of the Lord, Our Lady or a saint is determined to be supernatural.
2. "Constat de non supernaturalitate" entails that there has not been an apparition and thus, it is a fraud, a phenomenon of autosuggestion or, in the worst of cases, a diabolical intervention.

But when the Church does not see it clearly, when there is investigation to be carried out, when the church does not know with certainty what the origin of the events are, the determination of "Non constat de supernaturalitate" is issued. **This does not mean there has been no apparition at all. Quite the contrary. It will just require further study to determine whether a supernatural character is present or not.** The expression non constat is vital because it completely changes the meaning of the whole phrase. It only expresses doubt as a conclusion has not been reached yet. And this is the official position of the church regarding Garabandal: "Non constat de supernaturalitate" (The supernatural origin has not been confirmed). But this statement is not final and, as long as a conclusive judgment is not rendered, the Church is not only able to study what has happened but has the duty to do so in order call followers out of ignorance.

Source: [www.garabandal.it](http://www.garabandal.it)

## **RAFAÉL JARDÓN MENDEZ (1946-2011), A GREAT APOSTLE OF GARABANDAL**

*"Garabandal is key for the present and the future world. What comes, being God's doing, entails in itself such a change for the Church and the world that there is no resemblance to anything that has happened before". (R.J.M.)*

Rafael was a small soul, one of those Mary's children who gave everything for Her. At an early age she manifested to him and from that moment on he lived especially for her. Eventually, he became a great apostle of Garabandal. Rafael lived almost unnoticed because he was a deeply Eucharistic man, a truly lover of the Holy Rosary as well as a victim soul. He ignored absolutely nothing or nobody around him and therefore he tried to enkindle in everyone the fire of love for "Mommy" - as he liked to call Our Lady- that consumed his heart. This all-consuming love, in turn, instilled in others the desire to achieve a great intimacy with Jesus.

One of the Rafael's greatest wishes was to be able to comfort Our Mother's grief. Leaving Garabandal, when she would have wanted to stay, had caused our Mother immense pain. Furthermore, Rafael wished Garabandal, its story and above all its messages became known in every corner of the world. Thus, he spent his last years practically without mobility managing a Web page through which he spread Our Blessed Virgin Mary's apparitions in Garabandal and was able to be in touch with many people from several countries. Hence, in a term of approximately 7 years, his internet site had the impressive statistics of more than 27 million visits. He truly enjoyed seeing his website being visited and read! And, above all, he said it was not his but the Our Heavenly Mother's page.

While few were the one who talked about Garabandal at that time, Rafael devoted his whole life to spread Our Mother's apparitions, leaving behind decades of some sort of anonymity with respect to everything related to Garabandal.

Eventually, in a mysterious and humble way, Rafael was a great seed for Garabandal and above all for those who later became promoters of these blessed apparitions. Rafael visited the town when he was young, he met the seers and their families. He also became an intimate friend of many eyewitnesses and he earned the respect and love of the villagers effortlessly.

I met Rafael in 1979, the year I went to Garabandal for the first time. Quite soon, through letters and phone calls, we became close friends. Rafael became my guide and reference since then and he helped me work for the Virgin and love her along with the Church, the priesthood and the Holy Eucharist.

With great patience he encouraged me to love and continue walking through the path of virtue. He consoled me when things went wrong or when I was criticized due to my apostolate and also when I felt discouraged and alone. Rafael helped me understand people and to be merciful towards those who do not believe and follow a path where God does not practically exist in their lives. I also remember his words when I told him about certain bishop or priest who did not believe in Garabandal: "Don't worry, he'll believe". Nothing seemed to disturb him. Rafael was convinced that everything about Garabandal was the Apocalypse itself, that Our Mother had manifested herself in Garabandal in a new

and extraordinary manner and that the demon attacked him in a very special way. He used to tell me: "Garabandal binds the demon, that's why it's the main target of his attacks".

It has been my desire to dedicate something to Rafael for a long time. His early death at approximately 65 in 2011 meant for me an internal earthquake that I have recently been able to overcome. Nevertheless, "detachment" from this life was already planned for him.

He used to tell me that in the face of difficulties and decision makings I should behave like a small child: trust in Jesus and abandon myself to the tender heart and comforting arms of Mary because she would guide me and show me the path. He strongly encouraged me to have a very close relationship with Our Lady.

As a good man of God, Rafael put himself in the second place leading others to look just at Jesus and Mary. And in that way, he was preparing me for his departure.

After that, two priests appeared in my apostolate life and helped me overcome his death. One of them was Father Justo Lofeudo. It was Conchita who introduced us and soon after a great friendship started. The other priest was Father Rafael Alonso, founder of the "Home of the Mother", a man of God and Mary and an unconditional lover of Garabandal as well. I have also met Fr. Felix, Superior of the Home of the Mother, which is a jewel from any angle it is viewed. This international Public Association of Faithful of the Catholic Church is a tangible proof of a Church that is alive, full of priestly and religious vocations, the embodiment of the spirituality Our Mother showed in Garabandal. I encourage you to visit their web page: [www.hogardelamadre.org](http://www.hogardelamadre.org)

After this introduction, I will share with you some brief but significant paragraphs extracted from my dialogues with Rafael via email. His wisdom and the depth of his assertions make each line suitable for deep meditation.

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#### **WRITINGS BY RJM:**

*"Garabandal is key for the present and the future world. What comes, being God's doing, entails in itself such a change for the Church and the world that there is no resemblance to anything that has happened before".*

*"The Warning is an sublime grace, capable of changing everything and of uniting the Churches as soon as they let Mommy enter to govern her house (The Church) as co-redeemer. The Warning can work the miracle of changing the world for the better, as Jesus said."*

*"Regarding ecumenism the Churches have to "convert" to be ONE (Catholic, Apostolic and Roman), as the Blessed Virgin Mary stated in Garabandal, and only God is able to work this stir of consciousness (through the Warning)".*

"Owing to the Warning, we'll cry of happiness to see how much God loves us, Conchita said."

"Conchita said that Father Pio, apart from having had a vision of the Miracle before passing away, will be in Garabandal on the day of the great Miracle. This is even more credible since he has been seen in Garabandal after his death. It seems as if he were on a special mission, something he explained while he was still alive"

"Jacinta, Loli and Conchita said that the Warning puts an end to the worldwide persecution that makes the Pope leave Rome. The Warning comes when the Holy Mass cannot be celebrated without risking one's life and when Christians in general are martyred around the world by the persecution of Antichrist as it occurs in the vision Lucia had in the third secret. It has been said that everything has already taken place in the last century. Pope Benedict XVI states that "the prophetic time of Fatima has not been fulfilled yet. We must teach people that with Mommy they should not be afraid, that those who believe in her appearances will be protected and that they will only die if they voluntarily want to because there will be many sites protected by Saint Michael, by the objects kissed by the Blessed Virgin Mary and by those under her mantle. There will also be worldwide natural catastrophes such as cataclysms, but everything depends on the Prayer as Pope John Paul II said: nothing happens if we pray the Holy Rosary all together to avoid any disaster."

"As soon as the Dogma of the Coredemptrix is proclaimed everything will change radically. If the Church does not open its doors to its Mother and let her rule it, all this will be fatal."

"Thanks be to God for the Warning as many people will convert. The Warning, Conchita said, consists of some sort of fire from above that inflicts utter agony but at that moment God will suspend all the laws and will free us from dying, he will also make us see our conscience and His love. God will heal the conscience of the world and then, there will be ONLY a CLEAR choice as EVERYONE will know with certainty that God exists."

"The confrontation of the two Churches is inevitable. Mommy said that she and those who want to do God's Will will be persecuted due to compromises and commitments".

"God has chosen that when the Church receives its Mother as such, with full power, and not only as the Woman obedient to the Church, through her, He will restore the whole house (the Church). The Church will not be able to choose another creature because She is the sign of the Apocalypse, the Mother with her newborn Son. When the Dogma of the Coredemptrix is proclaimed and the Virgin is received by the whole Church, the latter will be immediately renewed by her Grace. The devil fights against her because when she "ruled" in her house there would be no place for the Evil. One day everyone will call her and she will come through the Warning and the Miracle, which is prior to the final Reign where there is happiness and

everything belongs to God. The greater persecution will come from within the Church as the Blessed Virgin Mary said in Akita: "those who venerate me will be persecuted by their own companions" who will deny almost all her apparitions. On the contrary, her children know each other because they believe in her, in her Apparitions. They consider her their Mother and they do her will that is truly God's".

"The apparitions of Garabandal, and in general the rest of the apparitions, represent the persecution of the Dragon against the Woman as it is written in Revelation 12 since Satan knows that the triumph of Garabandal is the END of his kingdom on earth. There has never been such a long and meticulously persecution against Our Lady by even using good souls who believe they are doing good to the Church. May everyone be certain that Mommy will triumph at her time on all fronts because generalized persecution is normally unleashed even against the apparitions that have been already approved by the Church as if the Church would doubt again. It is like an internal Schism of those who do not want her to triumph and evil is within the Church itself. Mommy clearly said that: "those who worship me will be persecuted ..."

www.pueblodemaria.com

## **PEACE WILL BE RESTORED BY SAINT MICHAEL'S TRIUMPH (R.J.M)**

In the calleja of Garabandal, there is "a piece of Heaven", expression underlined by Conchita in her diary, which is also known as the 'frame' ('el cuadro'). Up to this place, the Archangel Saint Michael brought the girls from a little further down the calleja because, at first, some children threw stones at the girls when these were alone.

In this place Jacinta saw the Sacred Heart of Jesus standing on a little white cloud. He pointed with one hand to his Heart while telling her with the other to come closer. Jacinta was very impressed by the look in His eyes and His infinite love.

The Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to the girls on July 2, 1961, the Feast of the Visitation, accompanied by two angels who looked like twins. They were Saint Michael and Saint Gabriel.

One eye, very bright, illuminated everything. It is a theophany of the Almighty God, who sees everything. It indicates that God initiates the course of the final events of human history. The Apparitions of Garabandal are an impressive set of events worked by God through his Blessed Mother and His angels, and with the significant actions of St. Michael.

The Appearances of Mary in the mountains of Garabandal brings to the Catholic Church the anticipated news of the glorifying advent that will enlighten the kingdom of Christ on earth.

Saint Michael, the Archangel, appeared in the calleja for the first time, sent by God for one of the greatest missions in history. The Archangel took the girls from here to a little above the bend, where there is a picture of the first apparition of the Virgin.

This happened the first days. In her diary, Conchita claims that:

"When we got to the calleja we began to pray but the people and the children who saw us going there were about to throw us out. Some children, who were hiding in some land where corn was grown, threw stones at us and we looked at each other and said: Why are you throwing rocks at us? We told them not to throw stones and they laughed at us and threw them again."

As from the third day, when people started to come, their enthusiasm began to increase and the day the Blessed Mother appeared, such was the frenzy that people kissed the girls after the apparition had gone and put some crossbars wood like a frame in order to protect them from the avalanches of people. Since then, this site has been called the frame ('cuadro')

The Archangel Saint Michael did not talk at first, he communicated with girls by gestures. His First words were uttered to talk about the Blessed Virgin. On July 1, 1961, Saint Michael told them:

"I am here to announce that tomorrow the Most Blessed Virgin Mary will appear to you under the invocation of Our Lady of Mount Carmel."

Finally, the pines ('los Pinos'), a well-known place where, after the Miracle, the Archangel will appear once again and where a Chapel will be built in Our Lady's honor, as she requested. The pines is a holy place, very dear to God, as the Blessed Virgin said.

This is the site where both the divine presence of our Blessed Mother can be currently perceived, and the Sign will remain intact. The aim of the Miracle and the Sign is to convert the whole world.

This is the only place where Our Lady requested the building of a Chapel. Meanwhile and prior to its construction, there is a Chapel dedicated to Saint Michael in the 'Campuca' (landfarm), which is situated a little lower.

St Daniel, the prophet, says:

"At that time Michael, the great prince who watches over your people, will rise up. It will be a time of distress such as never has occurred from the beginning of nations until then. At that time your people shall escape"

In Revelations 12:7-10, St. John states that:

"Then war broke out in heaven; Michael and his angels battled against the dragon. The dragon and its angels fought back, but they did not prevail and there was no longer any place for them in heaven. The huge dragon, the ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, who deceived the whole world, was thrown down to earth, and its angels were thrown down with it. And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

When the Church needed it most, still at the time of the Appearances of Garabandal, the prayer of Pope Leo XIII, with which St. Michael protected the Church, was removed from Holy Mass.

On October 13, 1884, Pope Leo XIII had finished celebrating Mass in one of the private chapels of the Vatican when, while standing at the foot of the altar, he suddenly turned pale and fell to the ground, apparently due to a stroke or a heart attack. However, no ailment had been the cause of this attack, but a vision of the future of the Church that he loved so much. After a few minutes, immersed in what seemed like a coma, he revived and told everyone around him: "Oh, what a horrible vision I have been allowed to see!"

What Pope Leo XIII saw was a period of more than one hundred years when the power of satan reached its zenith. This period includes the twentieth century and part of the next, the current one. The vision of the destruction of moral and spiritual values, both inside and outside the Church, deeply affected Leo XIII to the extent that he immediately composed a prayer to be said at the end of each Mass celebrated in any Catholic Church. This Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel was regularly said until the Mass was restructured. The customary version of the Saint Michael prayer reads as follows:

"Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and the snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray and do thou O Prince of the Heavenly Host, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl throughout the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen."

Saint Michael is the Archangel of Peace and when he retires, great calamities come. This Archangel will be invoked again. Let us ask him to forgive us for this offence, and he will

return triumphant to bring us the true PEACE that comes from Heaven and so that, at last, the Will of God be done on earth, just as we ask God, the Father, in the Our Father:

**"Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven."**

The Blessed Virgin Mary said in Garabandal that her Son Jesus will come again so that we may be saved by Him. Jesus brings with him a Kingdom of PEACE and happiness as never seen before because this is what we ask in the Lord's Prayer (the Our Father) when we say: "Thy Kingdom come". For the first time we will live with Jesus the true Paradise on Earth, a time prior to the END as it is asserted in Revelation 21: 3-7:

"I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, God's dwelling is with the human race. He will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will always be with them as their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there shall be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away. The one who sat on the throne said,

"Behold, I make all things new." Then he said, "Write these words down, for they are trustworthy and true." He said to me, "They are accomplished. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give a gift from the spring of life-giving water."

Rafael Jardón Mendez

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## REFLECTION OF FATHER JUSTO A. LOFEUDO ON THE MESSAGES OF OUR MOTHER IN GARABANDAL

Fr. Justo Antonio Lofeudo is a missionary of the Missionary Society of Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament. This catholic religious institute was founded by Fr. Martin Lucia with the purpose of opening the largest possible number of Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration Chapels throughout the world.

Now, we are going to focus on the first message of October 18, 1961:

***“We must make many sacrifices, do much penance, and visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently. But first, we must lead good lives. If we do not, a chastisement will befall us. The cup is already filling up, and if we do not change, a very great chastisement will come upon us.”***

Let us pause to consider these first words.

***“We must make many sacrifices, do much penance...”***

Their initial position in the sentence as well as the significance of their content gives the idea urgency and the seriousness.

The first thing that caught my attention were the adverbs "many (sacrifices), much (penance)". Already in Fatima the Blessed Virgin Mary specifically requested both things: sacrifices and penance. But why? She will explain it later in the same message. Humanity was doing very badly, it was turning away from God. What we did not see, Heaven did. Hence, Heaven came, in the person of our Mother, to warn us. It was a strong wake-up call.

Now, after fifty years from the messages of Garabandal, we see how the cracks that separated the world from God have turned into abysses. How the apostasy has become a deluge that covers the earth and how Christians are either disappearing or being brutally persecuted.

Nevertheless, the greatest tribulation of the Church does not come from the outside but from within, from the seriousness of the sins committed. Both scandals and apostasy of the faith have a devastating effect on the Church of Christ as they weaken its foundations. The Holy Father requests penance and he does so by recalling the third secret of Fatima, as it was revealed. The Pope compels us to purify our life. Only sacrifices and penance together with prayer and above all adoration are capable of stopping or mitigating the consequences of this walk towards darkness.

Thus, the message insists: "Many sacrifices, much penance". Such is the seriousness of the issue that our Mother requests to those who truly listen to her and love to raise awareness.

And only a penitent life as well as one offered entirely to the Lord is able to reverse the situation.

To make a sacrifice involves doing something sacred and offering it to God. It is something that belongs to us but we give it to God in recognition of his divine majesty, his glory and his love. In this sense fasting, for example, is a sacrifice as long as we deprive ourselves of something legitimate, such as food, to lovingly offer it to our God. Besides fasting, there are many other ways to make sacrifices. Penance, on the other hand, is the response to the evil committed, the recognition of evil as a way of reparation or compensation for it. In the Old Testament we read how even kings wore sackcloth and threw ashes on their heads as a sign of penance.

Sacrifices and penances opposes the hedonism of our society that only seeks individual pleasure. Mortification for the salvation of one's own soul, and that of other people, is an act of humility and self-denial that combats the mortal effects of the selfish pursuit of one's own pleasure that cost the price of breaking the law of God's love.

Unfortunately, the words sacrifice and penance are unsayable in this world. Nobody wants to hear them. However, the Blessed Virgin Mary still looks for children who would listen to her and would consequently respond to her call. Let us start by offering sacrifices and doing penance and then we must try to increase them.

"(We have to) visit the Blessed Sacrament ..."

We visit the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist because we recognize the true, real presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in this sacrament. We visit Him to adore him, we recognize his hidden but absolute glory. Finally, we visit Him to praise, bless and give thanks for the infinite gift of his permanence among us and also to repair before his presence the evil committed against his divinity and all that is holy. Those who visit the Blessed Sacrament give witness to the world of faith and love towards the Eucharist.

The Blessed Virgin Mary, who appeared in Garabandal as Our Lady of Mount Carmel or of Carmen, came to take us to her Son highlighting the Eucharistic presence of the Lord in the midst of her Church not only through these messages but also through the gestures of adoration and reverence that she compelled the girls to make through the mystical communions that they received from the angel and through the miracle of July 18, 1962 in which the sacred Host, given by Saint Michael to Conchita, became visible in her mouth.

The presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist is real, corporeal, sensitive, detectable and complete. It is the presence of Emmanuel, God with us and for us, who keeps His promise not to abandon us. He will accompany us until the end of the world (cf. Mt 28:20).

To visit the Most Holy Sacrament is to answer the Lord. It is to open the door of our intimacy and to enter into His. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my

voice and opens the door, then I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with me" (Rev 3:20). The one who worships, opens the door of his heart to God and makes him enter into his life and shares with him the secret of His tenderness and the truth of His mercy.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Mt 11:28). The Holy Father John Paul II said that these sweet words were fully accomplished before the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. It is Jesus Christ who calls us from His Eucharistic dwelling to his presence that saves, heals and consoles.

Whoever worships the Sacramental Bread has already the grace of adoration, has the life of grace in himself and knows the grace of life. He who loves, tastes the delights of Heaven and worships the Lord who gives life, true life, life in abundance, eternal life. That person worships the One who has the power to recreate life when such person surrenders to His grace. He is God, present in the Most Blessed Sacrament, and we adore Him.

*"... But first, we must lead good lives."*

I have always seen this phrase as an unmistakable stamp of authenticity. The Virgin has not only asked for sacrifices, penance and to visit the Blessed Sacrament, but she has also added something really important: first, we must be very good. If she would have talked about a path of conversion, many would not have understood it. If she would have asked us to be saints, many would have been discouraged thinking that holiness is just for a few; when in reality it is for everyone because we are all called to holiness, to fill the potential for holiness that everyone has according to how we were created and to our particular circumstances in life. Our Mother say nothing, but to "be very good." We all understand what it means to be good and what "to be very good". We all know when we do something that is wrong, that is not exactly good in God's eyes. Although we may hide it most of the time, we still know it.

"Be very good" is a powerful phrase. Penance, sacrifices as well as acts of devotion are not enough if our heart has not been willing to be purified before. God cannot be contemplated with eyes polluted by this world. It is impossible to praise God and talk to Him with the same lips that utter expletives, tell lie, murmur, defame and slander. God cannot be listened to with ears that are pleased to hear slander, dirty stories, words that offend the Lord, that our Mother reproves and makes her sad.

The eyes must be a clear reflection of a limpid soul and a pure heart. The lips should bless even those who curse us. The ear must be attentive to listen to the Word and to the call of the King and our Lord.

Therefore, to be very good, we must purify our eyes so that they could contemplate God. The gaze should not be distracted by the vain things of this world, much less be clouded by impurity. The mouth must be purified like that of the prophet, to talk to God and

about God. The ear must listen to the Lord even when the noise of the world wants to silence His voice.

We are very good when the heart is purified to respond promptly to God's call. Our heart has to be humble and meek as the Heart of Christ, to do His will and to love as the Lord wants us to love.

*“... If we do not, a chastisement will befall us. The cup is already filling up, and if we do not change, a very great chastisement will come upon us.”*

The Warning is terribly serious. The magnitude of the evil entrenched in humanity and in the Church herself was already considerable high at that time. Neomodernism invades the faith, corrodes the sound doctrine of the Church, vanishes the liturgy, trivializes the Eucharist and makes the Second Vatican Council be interpreted as false, contrary to the wishes of the council fathers. The theology that appears as dominant is not at the service of the Truth, the spirit is not the Holy Spirit but that of the world. This panorama is dominated by existentialist and nihilistic currents together with the advance of marxism in the political and cultural fields. The distancing of the light from the truth, the rejection of transcendence, the rebellion against God that invades the spirits and the black stain which spreads throughout the West that ceases to be a Christian. In those years it is possible to identify the birth or at least the worsening of the current apostasy. The call to change does not admit delays. The destruction is at the doors. However...

In the light of the systematic denial of the local Church to admit even the mere possibility of the supernatural of facts.

In the light of the rejection of the message, four years later, the Archangel Saint Michael gave, on behalf of the Mother of God, the following message:

message of June 18, 1965

***“As my message of October 18th has not been fulfilled and has not been made known to the world, I tell you that this is my last message. Before, the cup was filling up. Now, it is overflowing. Many cardinals, many bishops, and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them. Less and less importance is being given to the Eucharist. You should turn the wrath of God away from yourselves by your efforts. If you ask for His forgiveness with sincere hearts, He will forgive you. I, your Mother, through the intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel, ask you to amend your lives. You are now receiving the last warnings. I love you very much and do not want your condemnation. Pray to us with sincerity, and we will grant your requests. You should make more sacrifices. Meditate on the passion of Jesus.”***

*Before, the cup was filling up. Now, it is overflowing.*

Four years later the situation has worsened to the point that it has overflowed. There is no longer a barrier to stop the precipitation of evil. And, as we will see, not only in the world but above all in the Church herself. In fact,

*“Many cardinals, many bishops, and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them...”*

This part of the message was even more difficult to accept by some members of the Church who were the ones who had to give a judgment about the authenticity of the messages. How was it possible, it was said, that the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, could talk in those terms? They did not want to acknowledge the bottom of the truth of what was actually happening. The scandals and the grievous errors in the doctrine were expanding and covering entire regions.

But paradoxically, these days it is this part of the message the one that gives more credibility to the apparitions. Cardinal Ratzinger’s famous meditations of Way of the Cross in 2005 warned about the corruption within the Church. In the ninth station he said: “How much filth there is in the Church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to him! How much pride, how much self-complacency! (...) All this is present in his Passion. His betrayal by his disciples, their unworthy reception of his Body and Blood (sacrilegious communion and he also mentioned unworthy eucharistic celebrations) is certainly the greatest suffering endured by the Redeemer; it pierces his heart. We can only call to him from the depths of our hearts: Kyrie eleison — Lord, save us...”

In the prayer following the meditation, Cardinal Ratzinger added: “... It is we who betray you time and time again, after all our lofty words and grand gestures. Have mercy on your Church (...) When we fall, we drag you down to earth, and Satan laughs, for he hopes that you will not be able to rise from that fall; he hopes that being dragged down in the fall of your Church, you will remain prostrate and overpowered. But you will rise again. You stood up, you arose and you can also raise us up. Save and sanctify your Church. Save and sanctify us all.”

Recently, Benedict XVI opened the Year for Priests to rekindle in the priests of Christ the love for the mission and the fidelity to the commitments assumed, including chastity. He took St. John Vianney (the Cure of Ars) as model of priests, a humble rural priest in the anti-clerical France of the nineteenth century who knew how to welcome sinners and take them to the forgiveness of the sacrament of reconciliation. The model of priest, for the Holy Father, is a man of prayer and adoration, a lover of the Eucharist capable of transmitting Christ's love to the people of God entrusted to him as well as a man who spends a lot of time in the confessional.

The Holy Father is aware of the fact that the greatest dangers the Church shall face do not come from outside but from within, and not only by the scandals of careerism, money and

sin against the sixth commandment, in its most perverse and heinous manner, but above all by the greatest of all dangers: the loss of faith. In many study and formation houses, the false theology continues to wreak havoc and, in the best of cases, confusion when it does not give rise to skepticism in young pious and believers. In seminaries, psychologists and sociologists have taken the place of the spiritual director. In Catholic universities, many are the university chairs devoted to corroding the faith by insinuating uncertainties. Above all, Bible studies regarding the Word of God are no longer inspired by the Holy Spirit, it is treated as if it were a corpse to be dissected. While mere assumptions are exposed as if they were unappealable truths because they come from a supposedly scientific knowledge, the dogmas of faith are covertly or even openly challenged. For example, in these universities, some of them pontifical, the historical truth of the Resurrection is questioned and even the divinity of Jesus Christ. The so called historical-critical method is, for this theology, the only measure of truth and evidence.

*"The Eucharist is increasingly given less importance. You should turn the wrath of God away from yourselves by your efforts. If you ask for forgiveness with your sincere souls He will forgive you."*

The Eucharist is the treasure of the Church. It is the infinite gift that the Lord made of himself. The Eucharist is the essence of the Church and there is no Church without the Eucharist. The whole spiritual life of the Church recognizes its source and its summit in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is a sacramental sign of the Presence of the Lord, of his Sacrifice and of Communion in the mystical Banquet. All these dimensions are closely linked. This presence alludes to the unique, real, true, substantial presence of the divine Person of Christ. The Sacrifice at Golgotha is made present again, that is, it renews at the moment of the celebration, that is to say, the perpetuation of the sacrifice of the cross, of Christ's death for us.

Through the Eucharist we are intimately united, in communion, with God and among us through him.

With beautiful words the then Cardinal Ratzinger shed some light on the mystery by saying: "What would become of us without the Eucharist?"

There would be no Church, there would be no sacrament, there would be no priesthood, there would be no presence, that unique presence of the Person of Christ, there would be no redemptive sacrifice."

"... The priest opens heaven so that Christ may come to earth."

“The priest does not act by himself but has put on Christ and not only on the outside but also and above all on the inside. The Lord has taken possession of him and he does not belong to himself, that is why the Lord acts and works through the priest.”

"The Lord is present and utters through the mouth of the priest the holy words that transform earthly things into a divine mystery."

“The Mass is not just a banquet. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is present in the Mass. He is present.”

"The sacrifice of the love of God which tore the veil of the temple, which split the wall that separated God and the world in two, that is the Mass. This is the event of the Eucharist. This is His greatness.”

Redemption is present because the crucified love is present.

The spear of the Roman soldier penetrated into the depths of the Heart of God.

Christ has torn the sky at the hour of the cross and always tears it again at the hour of the Holy Eucharist."

The Lord gave us the Eucharist at the Last Supper to be celebrated and contemplated. Well, what has been happening, especially since the Blessed Mother gave us this message? The Eucharist was trivialized, it was degraded to a mere protestant banquet of a purely horizontal nature, where the presence of Christ, by the liturgical vanity, became (although it was not said) symbolic. The amazement of the mystery vanished, the contemplative dimension was lost alleging that the Eucharist was given to be eaten and not adored, even when the Holy Mass is in itself the most sublime act of adoration. The Holy Father more than once recalled the words of St. Augustine: "Let no one eat of that flesh (receive the Eucharist) without first worshiping it (...) because if we do not adore Him we would sin".

The Eucharist and the priesthood are the gifts and the mysteries the Lord left us before His Passion and, consequently, they claim each other. They were created together and go together: there is no priesthood without the Eucharistic sacrifice or the Eucharist without a ministerial priesthood. For this reason, as the Eucharist is given less importance, the priesthood decays and becomes degraded. It is degraded by bad practice, a consequence of the aforementioned bad theology and by the liturgical pollution that horizontalized the celebration, displacing the center, which is and must always be God, towards the priest and the faithful. In this way, every dimension of transcendence has been lost, all reverence and amazement before the mystery, has turn, in many parts of the world, into the anarchy of the cult. The priest became the protagonist, the tabernacle was hidden, the altars, which once were higher, are now levelled down. Some churches seem more like an

amphitheater than a church. In brief, "what is holy was given to the dogs and the pearls were thrown to the pigs" (Mt 7: 6).

Those in favor of these reforms are the ones who make fun of people stating, based on the Holy Scriptures and the Magisterium, that God is just and His justice fearsome. "The wrath of God," they say, is a story to scare gullible and fearful souls. This is a diabolical plan as, on the one hand, it trivializes the mystery by taking away from the Eucharist its sacrificial and therefore salvific dimension. This plan also ignores the real presence of the Lord, and on the other hand, it degrades the priestly ministry, turning the Holy Mass into a mere table of fraternal communion. In this way, God is offended as worship is not rendered to worship with due reverence and anointing. At the same time, the way of repentance is discredited because God, they say, cannot be offended as He is both impassive and merciful. This is tragic fallacy that leads to eternal damnation.

The Mother of God urges us to initiate a true path of conversion by exhorting us to repent, to honor and to adore the Holy Eucharist and to ask for God's forgiveness knowing that He is just and that we can only offer His infinite mercy as our own merit.

*"I, your Mother, through the intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel, ask you to amend your lives. You are now receiving the last warnings. I love you very much and do not want your condemnation."*

The time left for major events to manifest is very short. Actually, these events have already begun. These could be seen in the general apostasy, the rebellion of nations against the Law of God, the persecution of Christians that is nothing but the war against the Lamb, the great darkness covering the world. But, the Lord does not leave us alone. He promised that he would be with us until the end of the world and that the gates of Hell will not prevail over his Church (cf. Mt 28:20 and Mt 16:18).

**The true Church is persecuted and must hide, but even if at some point it seems to have disappeared, it shall not.** This is also the time when Heaven is present through these Marian apparitions to warn us and also to console us with the Mother of God's maternal presence and closeness. This is the time the Lord wants the ineffable and infinite gift of the Eucharist to be better known, loved, worshiped and perpetually adored. The adoration that does not end, the perpetual adoration, stands as the superabundant grace when sin invades everything, and perversion is imposed by laws and darkness surrounds the earth. The Blessed Virgin Mary offers us her special protection. We must remember that she appeared in Garabandal as Our Lady of the Mount Carmel. Under the same invocation Our Lady had appeared in Fatima on October 13, 1917, when the series of apparitions to the three little shepherds ended. And previously, in Lourdes, the last appearance had taken place on July 16, the day of Our Lady of Carmel. These are not just coincidences but signs.

In this ancient avocation, that of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, the Blessed Virgin offers the scapular as a sign of her protection and as a promise of entrance into Paradise. The scapular is not a talisman but the seal of a covenant of love.

She came and comes to protect us on the condition that we listen to her and do what she asks.

Therefore, the scapular is also a sign of our commitment, our consecration to the Mother of God. It shows we are willing to amend and change our lives by making a path of conversion whose goal is the encounter with God.

The scapular she offers us is welcomed to the extent her messages are. To clothe ourselves with the Blessed Virgin's protection and guidance and to be worthy of her promise implies committing ourselves to live her messages of sacrifice, penance and sacramental life.

*“Pray to us with sincerity, and we will grant your requests. You should make more sacrifices. Meditate on the passion of Jesus.”*

Words of great comfort. The Lord does not reject a sincere and humiliated heart, he does not despise a broken spirit (cf. Sal 51). The Blessed Virgin speaks in plural because She is our Lawyer and Mediator of all graces.

The deep contemplation of the Passion of the Lord should lead us to sacrifice ourselves more, to imitate his love.

Contemplate, meditate, do it like the Virgin who kept everything in her heart (cf. Lk 2: 19, 51).

To contemplate is to touch the pierced Heart of Jesus Christ, to touch his wounds with our faith. When we meditate and enter into the depth of the mystery of God made man, dying on the cross, and we begin to glimpse the full width, height and depth of this love, we are transformed. We are renewed because the Lord touches our wounds, those that are the product of sin, our own or others', and we are transformed from grace to grace.

When we fix our gaze to contemplate the Crucified, we get to know God: "This is God" because "whoever has seen the Son has seen the Father" (cf. Jn 14: 9). And we are healed. "By his stripes we are healed" (Is 53: 5). Christ shows us His glorious wounds that tell us of His love teaching us what it means to love.

In the Eucharistic celebration, the memorial of his Passion, we remember the price of our salvation and the infinite love of God for each one of us. And in the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament we place ourselves before the real, true, unique, tangible, corporeal presence of Christ in the Eucharist, that is, before Christ himself who consoles us, heals us, gives us true life and fills us with peace. It is God who became not only man but bread to give us eternal life. By meditating on the Passion of the Lord we receive the light to recognize our

sins and find the Lord's forgiveness in the sacrament of reconciliation. His forgiveness frees us and makes us capable of receiving graces.

By the meditation on his Passion we understand the infinite value of the sacrifice of Christ and the total union with that of his Blessed Mother on the cross because She is our true Mother, who seeks our salvation by taking us to her Son. Through meditation we receive the strength to bring Christ, the only Savior, to the world and to resist the attacks and the persecutions we will face.

As Msgr. Fulton Sheen, the great worshiper and preacher, said: You will have to fight many battles, but do not worry because in the end you will win the war before the Blessed Sacrament."

Fr. Just A. Lofeudo

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## **TESTIMONY OF THE BRIGADIER OF THE CIVIL GUARD, MR. JUAN ÁLVAREZ SECO**

During the Apparitions, Mr. Juan Alvarez Seco was a brigadier of the Civil Guard, the head of the region of Puentenansa, the district upon which San Sebastián de Garabandal belongs to. He witnessed the apparitions throughout 1961, 1962 and 1965.

Mr. Seco said: When I was close to being promoted to Brigadier, I said to myself: “I don’t want to be stationed up North.” But it seems that the Divine Providence had destined me to Santander. Looking back, I can see that I was meant to be in the North, especially at the border of Palencia, Asturias, and Santander, in Rionansa.

On April 1, 1961, I took charge of the Civil Guard in Puentenansa, the aforementioned sector, with numerous recommendations from my bosses. I received the position as a special privilege because my predecessor had to leave to another destination by order of the Superiors and for the good of the service.

I had only been in the area for two months, but it was enough for me to get to know the district assigned.

The events I will narrate began on June 18, 1961. Something marvelous occurred in my district, of which I was notified on June 20. During a visit to Dr. José Luis, a physician, he told me some amazing news. According to two women from San Sebastián de Garabandal, St. Michael the Archangel had appeared to four girls.

Though the reason I had asked for the appointment in the first place was to request a prescription for my hearing, I believe I did not ask him about the prescription in that moment. I had the impression that I did not need it because I had understood perfectly well what he had told me about the women. I went immediately to the quarter to inform about this event to the corporal, Mr. José Fernández Codesido, whom I reassigned to San Sebastián de Garabandal to gather information regarding the four girls in case it might concern us.

When he returned, the corporal informed me that all of the girls’ accounts had concurred as regards the Apparition of the Angel. The protagonists were: Conchita González González, 12 years old, who had no father; María Dolores Mazón González, 12 years old and daughter of Ceferino, the President of the Local Assembly, Jacinta González González, also 12 years old, who belonged to a numerous family, María Cruz González Barrido, the youngest of the group, she was 11 years old at the time.

The four alleged seers separately informed the corporal Fernández the following: They had been playing marbles at the entrance of a country road called “Ventura” next to a small orchard belonging to the schoolmaster. There was an apple tree in the garden full of

apples, which called the girls' attention. Just as any normal children would, they picked some apples from the tree to eat without thinking twice. Regarding the Apparitions, I thought it best to give notice to my superiors.

But, following the advice of the parish priest, Fr. Valentín Marichalar, I held back for a few days, awaiting new events.

On June 21, I decided to visit the parish priest, but we came across on the road to Garabandal. Mr. Eustaquio Cuenca was driving him to Santander to have a meeting with the Bishop. Consequently, I felt obliged to return promptly to the quarter to write a report to my superior explaining everything about what had happened in Garabandal. I gave the report to a guard so that he could hand it in to my superior.

The next day, June 22, I decided to go to Garabandal again with my assistant to personally investigate the events that were taking place there. Garabandal is a small mountain village made up of about 70 houses. The great warmth of the villagers, however, somehow makes people forget how small it really is. It is located in the foothills of the 'Picos' (Peaks of Europe) and near Peña Sagra. Garabandal borders with the provinces of Asturias, Palencia, and Santander. At the time, the only road that led to Garabandal was a difficult one. It began in Cosío and wound around the mountain for seven kilometers before finally reaching the village.

During my uphill climb to the little village, I contemplated the beautiful view, which reminded me of the nativity scenes in Cataluña during Christmas time. In the village, I observed how water, chickens and pigs ran through the streets... there were also sheep, goats, and cows with their bells chiming.

The inhabitants uphold many religious customs. They never forget, under any circumstances, to pray the Angelus as soon as the clock strikes noon. In the afternoon, they pray the holy rosary, led by the parish priest, or in his absence, by the school teacher or Maximina, a widow. Upon nightfall, Simon's wife, Jacinta's mother, goes out through the village with a lantern and rings a bell to remind everyone to say the last prayers of the day. On Sundays, after attending the Holy Mass in the old and humble parish Church, they rest a little bit. In the afternoon, the youth gather on a porch. They have fun by singing and playing a tambourine; their voices and movements are full of respect and honesty.

As I have previously mentioned, I arrived in the village with my assistant, Celemín. He introduced me to a resident of Garabandal named Valentina. This amiable woman, whose face reflected goodness and love, treated me as though she had known me for years. She told us the following without hesitation: The first apparition had taken place on Sunday, June 18. When the girls had finished praying the Holy Rosary and after the Catechism class in the Church, they were free to play. They decided to go to the calleja, leaving behind some of the girls and inviting another girl to go up with them to play marbles. Apart from playing, they also picked apples from the schoolmaster's orchard. When the schoolmaster

saw that the tree was shaking, he asked his wife to find out what was happening because they thought that the sheep were in the tree. Apparently, the four girls began to laugh and nothing happened. Once they were full and had some fruit in their pockets, their consciences began to prick them a little. Their reaction was to blame the devil for what they had done.

They took some small stones and threw them with all their might towards a corner where they thought the devil was laughing at them. Once they were calm, they decided to leave the orchard and return to their games. In that moment, Conchita saw a very beautiful figure. It was small, with bright shining wings, and pointing to the apparition, she said, "Over there! Over there!" The other girls, seeing Conchita, tried to run away to tell her family, because they thought she was going to faint. But suddenly, they fell into ecstasy too and saw the Angel in the same place. They all cried, "The Angel!" Some children who were also playing in the calleja threw pebbles at the girls, and that was when the Angel led them about 50 meters higher on the path. While they were on their knees looking towards the Angel and listening to him, a villager who was walking down the mountain carrying a honeycomb wanted to pass by them. The fact that they did not move to let him continue annoyed him considerable, so he did not pay any attention to what was actually happening. However, as he was approaching the village he thought to himself that it was strange that the girls had remained in the same position. He says that he could not sleep that whole night because he was thinking about how strange it had been. He explained it to his wife, who answered that it the girls were just behaving as any girls.

During this first apparition, the Angel asked the four girls to go to that same place and pray the Holy Rosary every day. He said that he would be there with them. The girls, shaken and in tears, walked toward the Church to pray and from there, they told their families what had happened. Their family members feared that the girls were lying, and did not want to let them go to the calleja the following day. Only Conchita's mother was resolute in her opposition. But when the rest of the girls went to her and begged her, she let them go to the calleja, and promised them that Conchita would meet them later. Mrs. Valentina said that, "It is better for them to see an Angel, than something worse."

Several women spied on them, and when they saw that what the girls said was true, they began a great commotion in the village. They announced it to everyone. Everyone was convinced, and they all went to the calleja to witness the visions. No one mocked them.

After that day, I was happy and I ordered a pair of Civil Guards to keep an eye on Garabandal. The news ran through all of the neighboring villages, and people came to Garabandal daily, which was what prompted intensified surveillance.

After the third or fourth apparition of the Angel, eight or nine days passed without a new apparition, so the people began to doubt. After these days, the Angel began to appear again and each day 500 to 3,000 pilgrims came to Garabandal to witness the apparitions. I remember that the girls said that they had three calls. At the first call, they experienced a

sensation of joy from their chests to their throats. The second call produced the same sensation. You could tell when they had had the second because they got fidgety and put on a sweater as if they had to go to Church.

After several apparitions of the Angel, a teacher arrived in San Sebastián de Garabandal to tutor Eustaquio Cuenca's son because he had failed some classes.

The parish priest, Fr. Valentín, asked the teacher to accompany the girls during the apparitions in order to listen to their conversations with the Angel, and to take down notes.

The people who went to see the apparitions discussed whether the girls were hypnotized or given pills, or things like that. After an apparition, my companion, a Sergeant of the Civil Guard, informed me that after Conchita's ecstasy ended, the teacher took her to Eustaquio Cuenca's house. The Sergeant thought that what the people were suggesting was true: that the teacher was giving them pills. Therefore, I went to Eustaquio Cuenca's house, who was a wealthy man, and I did find Conchita with the teacher. I asked him why she was there and he answered that Fr. Valentín had entrusted to him the task of gathering information from the girls after the visions had taken place. He asked the girls to tell him about the conversations, and what the Angel wanted. Later, he would write a report that Fr. Valentín would send to the Bishop.

Some suggest that Conchita always decided beforehand when the girls would leave their houses to go see the apparition, and that she was the one who influenced the others. Others claimed that it was an illness. María Dolores' father requested that the doctor, Mr. José Luis, President of the Local Assembly, examined the girls. Mr. José Luis came to Garabandal accompanied by Ceferino and the Mayor. They brought the girls to Ceferino's tavern, and then took them into the room where Ceferino kept the bread. There, the doctor gave them a medical checkup. I remember that after the checkup they left quickly so they could go to the calleja and see the vision of the Angel.

The doctor said that the girls had epilepsy and were sick; everything that happened was due to a sickness they had. But I could see that the girls were doing very well and each day they were more beautiful and healthier. Their parents and siblings, however, seemed tired, and it was shown on their faces that they were physically exhausted as well as sleep deprived.

The parish priest and others ordered they were separated into pairs in order to see if they would reach to the site of the apparitions at the same time. When the next apparition took place, the four girls left from different places and reached the location at the same time.

The four girls came out of the ecstasy with the same ease with which they had entered. They were very happy and perfectly normal. All those who witnessed those scenes were

very impressed. Everyone wanted to touch their hair and the women wanted to kiss them. They were protected by the two Civil Guards until the crowds dispersed.

On Saturday, June 24, people from many different places who had heard the news walked through the village.

In the location where the apparitions occurred, the villagers had put up a wooden fence so that the visionaries would not be mistreated, pinched or hurt by the avalanches of people who wanted to approach them. This fence was later known as the 'cuadro', that is, the frame. The cuadro also let everyone see the girls along with the priests who normally surrounded them. When the apparition ended, they went to the sacristy of the Church to explain what they had seen to Fr. Valentín and other unknown observers.

On June 24 and 25, there were many more people than on the previous days, including many priests and doctors. During the ecstasy, a doctor wanted to pick Conchita up, but because of the excessive increase in weight that she experienced while in this state, he dropped her, and her knees hit the ground with a loud thud. When the vision ended, the doctors and priests examined her. Clearly, they observed the marks from Conchita's fall, from pinch marks, hits, and scratches from people who wanted to "test" the girls. But they did not experience any pain at all, and in the moment of the ecstasy they did not react in the least. They were not aware of anything of the exterior world during the ecstasies, and when they ended, the bruises and scratches did not cause them any pain; only the marks remained.

On Saturday, July 1, crowds of people from all social classes, including doctors, attended the apparition, which took place at about 7 p.m. and lasted for about two hours. When it finished, the girls said that it was very short, that it only lasted two or three minutes. It is humanly impossible to remain in that position even for just a few seconds, and even less with the angelic expression on their faces. But that day the Angel told them that they would see the Blessed Virgin Mary the following day.

On Sunday, July 2, the Calleja was full of people praying the rosary. Everyone wanted to be there when the ecstasy occurred. The second in command of the Nansa Electrical Company, Mr. Rocha, was next to me. He had come up to the village with Mr. Morales and Mr. Piñal, both doctors had been sent as part of the Committee organized by Bishop Fernández. I remember Mr. Rocha telling me the following: "This afternoon, the girls won't go up to the cuadro to see the vision". I replied that concerning supernatural affairs, a doctor does not get any say in the matter. I went around the bend in the Calleja and I saw that they were about halfway up the path. I stayed there waiting for them to go up to the cuadro because Mr. Morales was going to try to impede the apparition. However, to Mr. Rocha's surprise the visionaries went up to the cuadro unaffected by Mr. Morales' attempt to hypnotize them. The four of them, on their knees, began to pray the first mystery of the rosary and right away they had the vision. Mr. Morales arrived on the scene and was not able to prevent the apparition.

The four visionaries cried out together, “The Blessed Virgin!” At first, they thought that it was Our Lady of Perpetual Help, but later they realized that it was Our Lady of Mount Carmel, because she carried the Child Jesus and had a scapular on her wrist. The Blessed Virgin was surrounded by six angels, whom Conchita counted aloud. Conchita also said: “what an eye!” and after the vision we learned that it was the Most Holy Trinity, in the form of an eye. During the vision the girls started to cry, Mari Cruz more than the others. One of the doctors grabbed her by the neck to try to turn her face away but he was not able to. I thought that he had hurt her because I heard her neck crack, but she was unharmed.

After a short time in ecstasy, the visionaries’ faces became more peaceful. They were staying in front of the pines, María Dolores on the right, followed by Conchita and then Jacinta.

Mari Cruz was at the far left, at my side. All four girls had rosaries in their hands and we could hear them perfectly as they told Our Lady about their chores at home. María Dolores showed Our Lady her teeth, which we later learned was because the Blessed Virgin had said that she had very nice teeth. Next, Conchita opened her mouth to show Our Lady a chipped molar. We also understood that Our Lady must have asked them what the parish priest was like, because they answered that Fr. Valentín was ugly but very good. Fr. Valentín and many of those of us who were there were able to hear these words. Conchita also told Our Lady that she prayed a lot for the Civil Guards who protected them from the curious onlookers and prevented them from hurting the girls. They also asked Our Lady to let them try her crown on and in the end, she gave in and we watched as the girls took it and passed it from one to the other. Conchita also asked the Blessed Virgin to let her take one of the stars from the crown and put it on her head, so that people would see it and believe in the apparitions, but Our Lady answered that we already believed in them.

The seers describe the Blessed Virgin in the following way: she was wearing a white dress, a blue mantel, a crown of golden stars, with her hands outstretched and a long brownish scapular. Her hair was parted down the middle and her face was beautiful. She appeared to be about 17 years old and she was very tall. The four girls asserted that her voice is unmistakable and very melodious.

From this point on I have witnessed many apparitions and, in addition to the normal ecstasies, I have been present in hundreds of ecstatic walks, in which the girls ran in ecstasy very quickly through the village streets and sometimes they even ran backwards. No one could keep up with the girls when they ran during an ecstasy. Even when the seers ran to find themselves, those who were not in ecstasy were not able to keep up with the ones who were in trance. Some villagers tried to run with them too, but they could not keep up.

Moreover, I have also witnessed many times how the girls, still in ecstasy, returned objects kissed by Our Lady to their rightful owners without ever making a mistake. Some people

gave their medals again, but Our Lady told them that the medals had already been kissed. Other people gave them rings to be kissed, but they were not kissed; Our Lady only kissed wedding rings. Many times the girls returned the wedding rings to their proper owners, despite the crowds of people and the number of rings that they had in their hands.

The seers were “unattractive”, but when they were in ecstasy, their faces were beautiful and angelic. I have also seen them fall and hit their heads on a rock, with a loud thud, but it hurt me more than it hurt them because nothing happened to them.

The phenomena occurred over an extended period of time and with such a frequency (during a single day they might have two or three ecstasies) that it was almost impossible to count them or to tell about them all. Therefore, I can only tell a few cases and examples that I saw, although I remember so many things very clearly. I remember them so clearly that, God willing, as long as I live, I will never forget.

About the first message. The visionaries were in the cuadro, they looked very serious and concentrated on what the Blessed Virgin was telling them. Some of them were crying and those of us watching shared their feelings. Once the ecstasy ended, and while there was complete silence, Fr. Valentín said, “The Blessed Virgin has given these visionaries a message, which they can’t tell the priest, nor their parents, nor the Bishop.”

Our Lady told the girls that the next day they had to go up to the pines alone. To make sure that no one else would come, the visionaries suggested that two little girls accompanied them; they were probably about three years old and did not really understand what was going on. I remember that María Dolores told me, “Brigadier, you and my dad can be close by, but about 100 meters to the right of the pines. The priest and two religious sisters can also be there, but to the left of the pines, about 100 meters away. The rest of the people should be far away.” We did as they instructed, and we could tell when they entered into ecstasy because when they began to cry a lot, the little girls got scared and started to cry out loud. We later found out that the reason the girls had to be alone was so that Our Lady could give them the message for October 18, 1961. The girls made a little altar with fruit boxes at the base of the pine trees. They picked wild flowers and spent the whole morning fixing it up.

One day Our Lady appeared to the visionaries in the pines in the presence of a Civil Guard from Reinoso and one of his friends, both of whom had come in order to see an ecstasy. The witnesses said that they heard Conchita say to the Blessed Virgin, “but don’t hurt yourself on those branches,” because she had appeared very high up and between two pines. Primitiva’s daughter, Elvira, and another villager were also there.

Conchita’s hair is cut off. During one of the first apparitions, after giving Our Lady many rosaries and medals to kiss, Conchita showed Our Lady her pigtails, as if she were offering them to her. Some doctors, who had only been there for a day, came to take Conchita to Santander. It turned out that the previous day I had gone to Santander so I was not there

when it happened, but I had stationed two guards in Garabandal so that they could tell me what had happened in regards to the apparitions in my absence. Consequently, on July 27 and in agreement with the Bishop, the doctors took Conchita to Santander to put her into a convent. Other girls who were staying there were supposed to take her around the city to distract her, with the hope that she would cure from the sickness they believed she was suffering from. Once I got back from Santander to Puente Nansa, I called the guards that had been on duty and they informed me that at 1 o'clock p.m., St. Michael the Archangel had appeared to the three visionaries. They girls had told the Angel about their sadness because when the Blessed Virgin appeared that day in Garabandal, Conchita would not be able to see her. He answered that at 3 o'clock p.m., Conchita would be able to see Our Lady in Santander while they would be meeting her in Garabandal.

The next day at about 8 a.m., I received a call in Puente Nansa from the Brigadier in charge. Crecencio asked me, "What happened yesterday in Garabandal?" I said, "At 1 p.m. the Angel appeared to Mari Cruz, Jacinta and María Dolores and told them that Conchita would have the apparition of the Blessed Virgin in Santander at the same time." Crecencio confirmed that, in fact, Conchita had received the apparition of Our Lady at that time in Santander, at the convent gate.

A young man whom I had seen in Garabandal and who knew the visionaries perfectly well, told me that he had seen Conchita in Santander with some other little girls. He said that they were walking over the tunnel leading to the Railway Station, heading back towards the convent, when Conchita fell into ecstasy.

When Conchita's mother came back to Garabandal, she said that her daughter was sick and that was why she had visions. She said that it was all a lie, and that some ecclesial authority had declared that. Once, when I was close to the fountain that Eustaquio had donated to Garabandal, two villagers told Mari Cruz's mother that it was all a lie. If I had not been there, Mari Cruz's mother would have started a fight, but fortunately nothing happened.

Serafín got back from chopping wood in Navarra and asked his mother if his sister Conchita was there. She answered that she was in Santander so he requests her to bring her home. Back in Garabandal, one afternoon when Conchita was playing at a neighbor's house with Primitiva's granddaughter, she heard Our Lady's voice. She checked under the bed to see if the Blessed Virgin was there but did not see Her. The Blessed Virgin told Conchita to go to see her with the other girls the following day. When the four of them were together, Conchita told them not to leave Garabandal if people tried to take them to another place.

Conchita had told me about what had happened when they cut off her pigtailed: She said that they took her to a hair salon where there were two employees and the owner. One of the employees tried to cut Conchita's hair but she was not able to, or maybe she was just nervous, but in the end the owner had to do it. Conchita, rather than complaining about

having her pigtails cut, smiled and said, “Now I look better.” She had fulfilled what I think she had once promised Our Lady. She had offered her pigtails to the Blessed Virgin.

When María Dolores’ mother found out that Conchita’s mother had returned from Santander and had said that the girls were sick and that it was all a lie, she told her daughter (without Ceferino’s knowledge) not go to see the apparition when she felt the call. When the time came, María Dolores went to the Calleja. She was already in ecstasy seeing the Angel but it only lasted a minute or two and she returned home crying. When her father saw her, he said, “Your mother must have said something to you. What happened? Why are you crying?” María Dolores answered that she had only been with the Angel for a few minutes because her mom had told her that the apparitions were not real.

About a rock that Our Lady kissed. María Dolores left her house in ecstasy and went up the Calleja towards the pines. Leaving the path, she knelt down and we made a circle around her. Fr. Ramón Andréu was next to me and we watched as María Dolores picked up stones and held them up for Our Lady to kiss them. The girl said to her that this one was for a friend of hers or a family member in Cádiz. She picked up another and did the same, offering it for another person who was away from Garabandal. She took another and without saying anything, let it fall back on the ground. But I picked it up and put it in my vest pocket. María Dolores continued speaking to the Blessed Virgin and we understood that she requested that Loli showed her the last rock that she had kissed. Loli, looked up and touched the ground with her hand, but could not find the rock. We put two or three stones next to her and she touched them, but she did not pay any attention to them. But Fr. Andréu said, “Brigadier, take out the pebble that you stuck in your pocket and put it on the ground.” I obeyed and it seemed that Our Lady told her that the stone was on the floor because she touched various rocks and among them she found the one that I had put down. She picked it up and showed it to Our Lady and then put it back on the ground. I picked it up again and kept it. When the ecstasy ended I asked her if the rock that I had and that she had looked for, had been offered up for someone, she said no, so I kept the pebble.

Emilio Valle and his daughters came to Garabandal. That day, Emiliano’s daughters gave me various medals to give to María Dolores so that she could present them to Our Lady to be kissed. I did so and María Dolores had an apparition in the pines. I remember that it was an interesting case because María Dolores was on the ground, face-up speaking to the Angel and said, ‘if you don’t help me, I can’t get up.’ At that moment, I saw Loli stick out her arm and she began to sit up little by little until she was in a sitting position. It was just as if someone had given her his hand and had slowly sat her up.

One afternoon in 1961, I went to Garabandal and when I arrived, Eustaquio (God rest his soul) came out to meet me and said, “Brigadier, if you would had got here a little sooner you would have been able to hear Our Lady’s voice.” Passing by Jacinta’s house, I saw her with María Dolores standing at the door. They called out to me very joyfully and said that Mr. Angel Domínguez Borreguero, director of the Provincial Mental Hospital of Salamanca

had given them a microphone to record the Blessed Virgin's voice. I went to Mr. Domínguez to find out more and he told me, "I'd show you the tape, but we don't want to run the risk of erasing it." Gerardo Pleya, a professor from the University of Salamanca, accompanied Mr. Domínguez. Both of them were on their summer vacation in Llanes (Asturias) and when they heard about the apparitions, they came to Garabandal. If they wanted, they could also bear witness.

On July 25, 1961, feast of St. James the Apostle, I had a pair of guards stationed in the calleja and another in front of Conchita's house. The four visionaries were playing in a near-by field and it was probably about 7:30 p.m. The sky was completely cloudless. Suddenly a black cloud formed over the Piedra Sagra and at the same time there was a huge bolt of lightning. The girls fell on their knees filled with fear. The thunder was very loud. The girls looked up in ecstasy. I had to quiet Mari Cruz's mother's screams and we all remained in silence. Someone said without paying much attention that he had seen over the moon one or two figures dressed as the Holy Father does.

When his Excellency, the Reverend Dr. Doroteo Fernández y Fernández published the first report of the bishopric recommending priests not to go to Garabandal, priests would come dressed in civilian clothes. I remember that...

## **SECOND PART OF THE BRIGADIER'S TESTIMONY.**

(Mr. Juan Álvarez Seco's narration continues, both the syntax and the lexis are respected, where possible).

... Conchita, in ecstasy, states that the Blessed Virgin had said, "there are three priests in the village." Conchita replied that there was only one and then we heard her say "there are three." Finally, two men revealed that they were actually priests, but that they had go dressed normally because of the Bishop's prohibition. Another day, two second-lieutenants of the Aviation Corps came. I recognized them, but I did not want to say anything. Nevertheless, the seers found it out because Our Lady said they were chaplains.

On October 12, 1961, I individually received the Cross to kiss it from each of the four girls as a gift from the Blessed Virgin on the feast day of my patron saint and for having come to Garabandal that day.

October 17, 1961, I went up with 14 pairs of guards to maintain order. It was the day before October 18. Conchita came up to me in ecstasy and gave me the Cross to kiss, which for me was a sign of hope that everything was going to turn out well, despite the huge number of people that came to Garabandal and despite the heavy rain that did not stopped all day long. There was not even the slightest problem. I estimated that there were from 12 to 15 thousand people in Garabandal that day. The fact that there were 8 hundred to a thousand cars and no accidents happened was a huge surprise to me.

On March 18, as I was on my way to Cosío, I ran into my friend Fidelín, who offered me a ride in his car along with Fr. Jesus Silva, founder of the *Ciudad de los Muchachos de Orense*, and another younger priest and a young man with heart problems. The three of them were heading to Garabandal and the first contact they had was with María Dolores, who was in ecstasy at 11:45 p.m. After midnight, now being March 19, 1961, and still in ecstasy, María Dolores went up to the counter of the tavern, took out a pencil from the drawer and holding a holy card against the kitchen wall, she wrote on it what the Vision had said: “The Blessed Virgin congratulates Fr. José.” According to Fr. José, he had not told anyone his name, and his face turned pale. He received the sign as an immense grace.

Later, we went to Conchita’s house. Fr. Silva suggested Conchita doing a Holy Hour. Conchita asked him ‘what is that?’ Fr. Silva explained it to her, but then he remembered that he did not have the key to the Church or the Tabernacle to be able to give Holy Communion. Fr. Valentín, the parish priest, had the key, but he lived in Primitiva’s house. So Mr. Matutano, a Brigadier from Reinososa and I went to see Fr. Valentín to ask him for the key. Since I knew he would recognize me, I asked for the key, but he refused to give it to us despite Fr. Silva’s idea to do a Holy Hour. As we left, Maximina suggested that we check the Church to see if it was open on the way back to Conchita’s house. It was open, so about 20 of us went with Conchita and María Dolores. I remember that the Marquises of Santa María were also there. We found the Church door unlocked, but we needed the key to the sacristy in order to get the key to the tabernacle. However, Fr. Silva found that, although the sacristy was locked, the tabernacle was not, so he was able to hold a Holy Hour for all those who were present. We prayed with our arms outstretched in the form of a cross and almost everyone received the holy communion.

It was wonderful. The Marquises of Santa Maria, Matutano and others, who I cannot remember, can also testify to this. In addition, Fr. Silva told us that what was happening in Garabandal was real.

Mr. Damián and a cross: Mr. Damián, from Barcelona, had given a chain with a medal and a very small gold cross to Conchita so that when she was in ecstasy she could give it to Our Lady to kiss. Conchita had the vision and we all followed her at the Church door. We saw how she held up all the objects that Damián gave her so that the Blessed Virgin could kiss them, and then she, still in ecstasy, put the chain around Damián’s neck and we went back to Conchita’s house. But Mr. Damián realized that he only had the medal, the gold cross was missing. When Conchita came out of the ecstasy, back to her normal state, Mr. Damián told her about that. Conchita replied, “You’re right. The Blessed Virgin told me that it had fallen in front of the Church door.” I, and various others, looked for it around the church door, but it was so small that we could not find it. Yet Conchita went straight to it and picked it up, not only in front of me, but in front of everyone who was there.

My Glasses and the Sign of the Cross: I was in the kitchen with Conchita and several curious onlookers, waiting to see Conchita during an apparition. Suddenly, she fell into ecstasy and, passing by everyone else, she approached me and, with a Cross, began to cross me and said: “In the name...” At this moment, upon touching my glasses, she stopped and asked me to give them to her. I did not do so immediately, but she waited for me to put them in her hand. So, at the request of those around me, but with the fear that she might

break them, I gave them to her. She took them, folded them up, and gave them back to me. She made the sign of the cross on me, in a way that I had never done, and then she asked for my glasses again. She put them back on my face, also in a way that I had never done. As long as I live, I think that every time I make the sign of the cross, I will remember this. Our Lady told her to take off my glasses so that she could make the sign of the cross better.

One of the anecdotes that I will always remember as long as I live is related to a rosary and two paintings that were all kissed by the Blessed Virgin Mary. The paintings are currently in the possession of two different people. One day I went to Cabezón de la Sal to receive advice and orders from my Captain and afterwards I went to San Vicente de la Barquera to visit my good friend and coworker Espósito. We met in a bar and I noticed various calendars with immoral pictures on the wall.

Amongst those calendars, there was a holy card of Our Lady of Fatima and it really did not fit in, so I asked the bar's owner if I could have it. He did not give it to me but instead he gave me one of Saint Michael and finally I got the one of Our Lady of Fatima.

In Garabandal one day when María Dolores was in ecstasy, I gave Jacinta, who was not in ecstasy, an envelope with the holy cards so that she could give it to Maria Dolores so that Our Lady could kiss them. Jacinta did as I asked and when María Dolores gave the envelope back to me, kissed by the Blessed Virgin, Jacinta asked, 'What are the Holy Cards of?'

María Dolores responded, 'I don't know.'

'Well, ask Our Lady,' said Jacinta.

María Dolores did so, and after a few seconds she answered: 'The Blessed Virgin says that Our Lady of Fatima and St. Michael the Archangel are among the Holy Cards.'

You may not be able to imagine how exciting this all was for me. Today, my friend and benefactor Julia de Costa, the wife of a corporal of the Civil Guard, and their blind daughter, have the holy cards. They pray every day for humanity, which is in great need of God's protection.

Another interesting case: One afternoon a married couple arrived in Garabandal with a good friend of theirs, who was a painter. The man had already witnessed an apparition, and Our Lady had kissed a medal that belonged to him. But he doubted if it had really been kissed. This is what happened: in Ceferino's tavern, the painter gave two of his own medals, one was a typical medal of Our Lady, and the other was an oval-shaped medal with a cross on one side and the name "Alicia" on the other, and also another medal, to María Dolores. Upon taking them and seeing that the name "Alicia" was written on of them, she hesitated. But assuming that the word made reference to Our Lady, she agreed to give it to the Blessed Virgin to be kissed. Later, in ecstasy María Dolores showed the Painter's medal to Our Lady and said, "Look! how ugly they made you on this medal and how beautiful you really are!!!" The Painter turned white. He was overwhelmed, and he heard with his own ears the words of the Blessed Virgin: She said that the other medal, which the painter did not believe that had been kissed, had already been kissed. And, it was even

more striking for the painter's wife. She had wanted to go to bed because it was very late. But if she had done so, she would have missed the blessing of the apparition. For her, it was a teaching she will never forget.

I have seen Conchita suspended horizontally in the air. One of the apparitions which impressed me the most took place in Conchita's kitchen. My good friend Dr. Ortiz (who can also explain countless of apparitions), a priest named Fr. José Ramón Vázquez, a seminarian from Reinoso and various others were also there. Conchita went into ecstasy and gave some medals to the Blessed Virgin to be kissed and cried: "I can't reach you." It appears that Our Lady insisted on kissing them and Conchita repeated "I can't. I can't reach you." Jacinta, who was not in ecstasy, was also there and Conchita said to her friend, "Jump, because I can't reach." Those of us who were present tried with all our strength to grab Conchita and lift her up, but it was useless; we could not even move her or lift her feet off the floor, it was as if she weighed thousands of kilos. Yet, Jacinta went up to her and with barely any effort, and without any help, she lifted Conchita up. It left me speechless. But something even more surprising, which I will never forget, happened.

I was at the kitchen door and on my right was Dr. Ortiz, Fr. de Llanes (Asturias) and someone else. Conchita had fallen onto the floor in ecstasy, facing upward, and suddenly I saw how her body lifted horizontally off the floor. I wanted to put my hand between Conchita's body and the floor, but I did not have time because it only lasted a couple seconds. I assure you that I have no doubts about this and I do not think that I will forget it as long as I live.

In another ecstasy, Conchita had 5 gold wedding rings on the kitchen table. I believe that one of them belonged to Mr. Ortiz and another to his wife, the others I do not remember whose they were. Conchita took them and held them up for Our Lady to kiss and then put them on the table. She then approached me and I thought that she was going to offer me a cross to kiss it, just like the other girls did every time that I was in Garabandal, but instead she gave me one of the 5 rings, saying, "here, so that you can take it to Barcelona." That ring belonged to one of Paquita Olivella's sisters, from Barcelona. She later told me that one day she saw it glow. On this occasion, the priest who was replacing Fr. Valentín was present.

That day Conchita said to Our Lady, "A priest has come to substitute Fr. Valentín." Afterwards, she took off the new priest's glasses too and made the sign of the cross on him. It was the first day that he had been to Garabandal and he received a good impression. Fr. Valentín came back and the other priest left. I heard that the Bishop had told him something such as: "I sent you hoping you would testify against apparitions, but here you are, believing in the visions more than the girls themselves!"

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception, Conchita's feast day, they all congratulated Our Lady, and later we saw them playing hide-and-seek while in ecstasy. I remember that once, Jacinta came in bath robe and the Blessed Virgin told her that it was too short. I saw Jacinta looking at Our Lady and at the same time she adjusted her robe a little. Our Lady indicated how it should be. The miniskirts worn today are scandalous.

What I witnessed one Sunday: In the afternoon, I found myself close to Conchita's house and I heard her mom say: "Daughter, why are you wearing your new coat? If the Blessed Virgin appears, the way that the weather is and the streets are right now, you're going to get it all dirty." Conchita was walking towards the Church, and when she got where a deaf woman's house was, next to Loli's house, she fell onto the ground in ecstasy, with her right hand where her crucifix was, and smiled. She stood up, but with her gaze fixed on the vision, turned around and headed towards her house, and followed behind her with others.

We saw her go into her house and go towards the washroom but found the basin empty. She went down to the kitchen and got a water jug from under the table, but finding it also empty, she left the house. In front of her house there was a water fountain with two spouts. I followed behind her. She went down the two steps, filled the water jug and returned to her house. She filled up the basin and washed herself and the crucifix that she had gotten dirty. She changed her new coat for an older one, as her mom had instructed her. She went back to the Church in ecstasy and there she said a prayer; she was surprised to find that she had changed her coat and she smiled.

During the flu: Jacinta was in bed for a few days with the flu, with a relatively high fever. Her parents had prohibited her from getting out of bed as long as her fever continued. But, if Jacinta stayed in bed, she would not see the Blessed Virgin. I remember that when I found out that she was sick in bed, I went to visit her and while I was talking to her parents, she escaped into the street. As soon as she left the house she fell into ecstasy, you could see a smile on her lips and she looked like an angel.

María Dolores fell sick with the flu at the same time as Jacinta. I went to visit her, and she told me how she used to be very afraid of the police. I asked her why and she confessed how one time she and Jacinta had stolen a hammer and sold it for one peseta. With the peseta, they bought a chocolate pastry and ate it. Afterwards, they always thought that the Civil guard which passed through the village was there to get them. They said, "They're coming for us!" They also went into a garden and pulled up some turnips. The owner caught them red-handed and they tried to hide behind a wagon, but the owner called out: "Don't hide, I saw you! When the Civil guard comes they're going to take you away!". But now that the Guards escorted them and protected them, they were no longer afraid of them. I asked them if they had confessed all these things and they said 'Yes, a long time ago.'

One day María Dolores went up to the second floor, where she frequently had apparitions. Her father, Ceferino, told them that when they went down to the tavern, they should loosen the light bulb, because the light switch did not work. Loli, in ecstasy, grabbed onto the bulb and did not let it go. Those of us present thought that her hand was going to burn

if she held onto the bulb too long. Her mom said: “My God! She’s going to burn her hand,” and we tried to get the bulb out of her hand, but we could not; we were afraid to break the bulb and hurt her. So, we called Mari Cruz, who was not in ecstasy, went up and easily freed the bulb from her hand and went back down to the tavern.

One day, close to the fountain that Eustaquio Cuenca had built in honor of the town, I saw Jacinta in ecstasy asking Our Lady to let her hold the Child Jesus. Apparently, the Blessed Virgin told her: “No, you’re going to drop him.” Jacinta answered her: “No, no, I won’t drop him” and it seems that Our Lady handed her the Child. She walked through the streets of Garabandal with both of her hands, palms-up, and pretty close together, as if the Child Jesus were very small. I remember that she walked very carefully, so as not to drop him, as she had promised Our Lady. Towards the end of the ecstasy, Jacinta said: “See! I didn’t drop him!” as she raised her hands up, in a gesture of giving the Child Jesus back to the Blessed Virgin.

One afternoon, on my way up to Garabandal, Jacinta and María Dolores came out to see me and explained how Fr. de Llanes (Asturias) had given Mari Loli a camera and told her to take a picture of the Blessed Virgin during her ecstasy. Jacinta and Mari Loli told me that they took three pictures of Our Lady and that she instructed them how to do it and said that when María Dolores saw her clearly through the little hole, she took pictures. This happened three times, that is, three pictures. Fr. de Llanes took the camera and brought back the pictures, but Our Lady was not visible in the photos, which means that she was not in the pictures. Six months after this, Mari Loli’s father said to her one day: “Loli, when you’re with Our Lady, tell her to guide you with a pencil and paper, so that you can draw her and we’ll know what she looks like.” After the ecstasy, Ceferino asked his daughter what the Blessed Virgin had said and Loli replied: “She told me that she’ll tell me later.” One day in ecstasy, Loli was speaking with the vision and we heard her say: “Aren’t you in one of the pictures that I took of you?” and she went over to a shoebox where she kept holy cards and photos. Loli took three photos and showed them to Our Lady. She set one of them aside and, afterwards, when the vision had ended, she was asked: “Why did you separate one of the photos?” and she replied: “Because Our Lady said that in that photo you could see what she looks like and how she’s dressed.” Apparently, some people could see her while other could not see anything.

At 3 a.m. Eustaquio Cuenca’s daughter took the picture to her house and she saw how the Blessed Virgin appeared in the photo. I had just come back that day from checking out a position in Tudanca. When I got to Cossío I ran into Jacinta’s mom who was on her way to Puentenansa and she said, “Brigadier, did you hear that Our Lady appeared in one of the photos that Loli took of her?” I went straight to Garabandal, without stopping in Puentenansa, and asked Ceferino if what Jacinta’s mother had told me was true. He handed me a picture and said, “Here you have it,” I turned it over a couple times and... with my own eyes I saw the figure of the Blessed Virgin in the photo. I saw that she had big

eyes, like the image of the Immaculate Conception, a small and perfect nose, small, full lips and she had long hair. Ceferino kept this picture, but I have not heard anything else about it.

I have prayed the Holy Rosary with the visionaries and with Our Lady, just like others who have also followed Conchita. During one of the mysteries of the rosary, Conchita went towards the graveyard by a road that was full of water and about 30 centimeters of mud. The visionaries prayed the rosary very devoutly and those of us who followed them too! When we got to the graveyard, Conchita stuck a crucifix through the bars of the gate, apparently so that the faithful departed could kiss it. She moved her hand up and down, for those who were taller or shorter and it was as if they were standing in different choir lofts of the pilgrims in San Sebastián. When it seemed that she had finished, and after she had walked about 50 meters back towards the village, she returned to the graveyard, put her hand through the bars, as if initially someone had not wanted to kiss the crucifix or had delayed in kissing it.

About the surprise that Eustaquio received: Eustaquio's elderly mother lived in Garabandal and he came from Mexico to visit her for a while, leaving his wife and his daughter in charge of his business. When his daughter finished her classes and exams, both she and her mom came to be with him. Eustaquio's wife, hearing what was happening in her husband's town, brought a medal, which Eustaquio had left in Mexico, with her.

One day, his wife, without saying anything gave four chains with their medals to Loli and told her: "When you're with the Blessed Virgin, give her these medals and then put each one on their respective owners." Loli went into ecstasy on the second floor, above the tavern, and I went up and saw the scene. She held the medals up to be kissed, took one and placed it around Eustaquio's wife's neck and she, seeing that it was hers, began to cry and received a huge grace. Loli took another and placed it on Eustaquio's daughter and handed another to Eustaquio's wife. This last medal belonged to her son, who was not present. With the medal that was left, she went down the wooden stairs...

### **THIRD PART OF THE BRIGADIER'S TESTIMONY**

...and in ecstasy and among the people gathered in the tavern, she went straight up to Eustaquio, who was getting a little to drink, and tried to place the medal around his neck. Eustaquio, however, took a step back and said: "This girl must be mistaken, because I didn't give her a medal." When he saw the medal, he was greatly surprised and said "Good grief! This is the medal that I left in Mexico." His wife simply wanted to do this test, which is one of the many, many wonders that have occurred in Garabandal.

I also want to tell an anecdote about the staircase I mentioned earlier. Loli went down the staircase horizontally, slowly and in ecstasy several times. Also, one day, in ecstasy, she went towards the village holding out her cross for the sick and disabled to be kissed. When

she came out of one of the houses, I was at the door and she took off my glasses to make the sign of the cross on me. Another day, they told me that on the night before her cousin was to marry a young man from the village, she passed the cross over all the wedding garments. I was supposed to go to that wedding too, but I did not have time. So, the following day in order to congratulate them on their wedding I had to go through a waist-high water stream with the help of a young man of Cossío and assisted by a long stick.

Joseíto's nephew from Cossío had given several medals to Loli to be kissed and I remember that, among them all, she took one of them and, in front of everyone and in ecstasy, Loli said: "This medal was kissed by Pope Pius X" or Pius XI (I don't remember well). But anyway, the owner, Joseíto's nephew, confirmed that what Loli had said was true.

One afternoon, a Belgain priest arrived in Garabandal and, in Conchita's house, told us that he had been mistaken on certain occasions in affirming certain apparitions, so he had asked Our Lady to help him discern the truth. It was for this reason that he was in Garabandal. He said that if he saw that it was something supernatural, he would come to Garabandal with many others. Suddenly, Conchita fell into ecstasy and approaching the Belgain priest, she unbuttoned the neck of his shirt, took out a medal and offered it to Our Lady to be kissed. After that, he left, and two or three days later, he reappeared in San Sebastián de Garabandal.

The first time that Mercedes Salisachs went to Garabandal: I do not remember the exact day, but I do remember what happened. I arrived in Garabandal in the evening and I went to Ceferino's tavern. He came out to meet me, saying:

"Here is the Brigadier who had witnessed many Apparitions." He introduced me to Mercedes and told her: "This lady is from Barcelona and she wants someone to explain the apparitions to her." I greeted this lady respectfully and she asked me if I knew all about the apparitions. I answered in the affirmative. She recorded what I said on a tape and she did the same with a man who herded cows in the village, who said: "I don't know what has happened to me since I witnessed an apparition. I used to blaspheme a lot and now I don't". She also recorded a question she asked a priest. She said, "And you, father, do you believe in it?" Only Mercedes and I know that he answered that 'yes, he believed.' Later, I accompanied Mercedes to Conchita's house, and after she asked Conchita a couple questions, Conchita, in a matter of minutes, fell into ecstasy. I hoped that Mercedes, who had come from Barcelona with the desire to witness an apparition, would find one easily. I helped her to follow the girl through the street. After going through the village, Conchita stopped next to an electrical pole on the way back to her house. With her eyes fixed towards the sky, looking at the vision, Mercedes and I heard her say: "Ah, Mercedes' child is in heaven." Mercedes would have fallen hard to the ground if it were not for our intervention. I have this picture engraved on my soul, and it cannot be erased, like many, many other experiences that I have lived with the visionaries. I think that Mercedes, and those who were present during similar moments, could say the same thing.

I was also present when Conchita received a letter from Padre Pio, God rest his soul, from Rome. I ask him to bless me from heaven, to guide me and to help me to be a better person. Before Conchita fell into ecstasy that day, they told her to show the letter to the

Blessed Virgin and ask her if it really was from Padre Pio. Afterwards, Conchita said “yes”, it was from Padre Pio.

Another day, my friend and coworker, Brigadier Crecencio (from the Civil guard in Santander), who is Fr. Valentín’s nephew, gave me a medal to give to the visionaries when I went back to Garabandal. I think that I gave it to Loli, although I do not remember for sure. But, once it was kissed, I went to Santander and gave it to its owner. A while later, one of Fr. Valentín’s nephews, a cousin of the Brigadier’s wife, had to go to a Hospital in Valdecilla, for a swollen abdomen. They said that only a miracle could save him. They put that medal on him and he was miraculously cured.

Some important facts: I would like to note that in 1961, I only saw the doctors who were hired by the Bishop’s Committee to study the visionaries three times. While the doctors were in Garabandal, Mr. Rocha de la Nansa told me that Dr. Morales had said that the visionaries were not going to be able to go past the Calleja that day because he was going to hypnotize them. But that day they went to the Calleja like always. It ended up being a huge failure for Dr. Morales.

The second time I saw them was on October 18, 1961, when the first message was given. We took the doctors under custody so that the villagers (who did not like the way the doctors pinched and mistreated the girls) would not harass them.

And the third time, I think that they were in Garabandal during the night, while the whole village was sleeping, and they tried to take the visionaries to Santander, with neither the permission of their parents nor of the villagers.

I have in my possession a poem, handwritten by Conchita, sung by the villagers and the four visionaries on March 25, 1962 for the feast of the “Annunciation of the Archangel to Mary and the Incarnation of the Son of God.”

Today, Our Lady’s day,  
Feast of the Incarnation,  
We praise you  
With all our heart.

Madonna, Madonna  
Your beautiful smile  
And your ever-knowing gaze  
Give joy to our hearts.

Men, Women, and little girls,  
You already know our message  
The Blessed Virgin wants it to be heeded  
For the good of your homes.

Your little daughters  
Come to you, so that  
You might grant them a

Spot close to you.

Christians, follow Our Lady  
With humility and with zeal  
So that she may save us a place  
In the heavenly mansion.

I also attest that I have seen people place powerful lights before the visionaries' eyes, without them suffering the slightest damage. I saw them being pricked and pinched and if they realized what was happening, it was only because Our Lady told them. They also asked the girls tricky and embarrassing questions just to make fun of them. Once when I was with Mari Cruz, I heard her say to the Blessed Virgin, "Today a priest came, and he didn't do anything else but ask questions; he is so nosy!"

Two priests from near Bilbao made fun of Conchita while she was offering the Crucifix to the pilgrims to kiss it. She did not offer it to them. After that, they went regretfully to Jacinta's house to ask her to pray a rosary with them in reparation and, afterwards, Mari Cruz, in ecstasy, gave them the Crucifix. They were relieved and grateful.

From the beginning, I was present in all of the events related to the apparitions of the four girls: Conchita, Mari Cruz and Mari Loli. Today, seven or more years later, I continue remembering them each day. My position as the Regional Leader of the Civil Guard gave me the chance to clean my soul, which was so in need of it.

The apparitions took place along with so many amazing events and in such a religious way that I remember them well, and consequently I participated in many Cursillos in Christianity, and I am a member of the Association of Nocturnal Adoration. Nevertheless, I am convinced that I have done very little. I do not think that the Devil could take away the peace that I have today, a peace that was missing in my life before Garabandal. I live much more peacefully, because I remember the two messages that Our Lady gave to the world. And we all have to think about they say.

In conclusion, I wish to express to all the faithful Christians that the most important thing is to fulfill the message of June 18, 1965.

The devil is loose, but this is the age of Mary. Her Immaculate Heart will triumph, and we along with her, as long as we dwell in her Heart.

Barcelona, March 7, 1969.

Signed by he who was the Brigadier Sectional Leader of the Civil guard in Garabandal.

Juan Álvarez Seco.

## TESTIMONY OF FATHER VALENTÍN MARICHALAR TORRES

**Parish priest of San Sebastián de Garabandal during the apparitions.**

Fr. Valentín is by far the most informed of everything that happened in San Sebastián de Garabandal. He baptized the visionaries, taught them the catechism, prepared them for their first communion and attended many of the girl's ecstasies. Very often, at first, when the girls had barely left their ecstasy, he made them come to the church in order to interrogate them one by one, without giving them the time to agree on what they were going to answer. Therefore, the fact that they ignored the questions Fr. Valentín was going to ask as well as their young age are two important issues that have to be taken into account. It would have been very difficult for them to say everything without contradicting each other, and yet, according to Fr. Valentín the four sighted girls said the same thing. In addition, he heard them in confession and was the first person to inform about the events to the Bishopric of Santander.

Fr. Valentín firmly insists on the fact that "there was no one, absolutely nobody, let alone me, who was able to manipulate the girls during the apparitions".

He asked the Blessed Virgin Mary for a personal test, and sometime later he received it in such a clear way that it left an overwhelming impression on him. It was from then on that he said he had received a personal and unequivocal proof that the Apparitions were true. Six days after the first ecstasy, Fr. Valentín went to the Bishopric of Santander to request the assistance of "competent doctors and priests because he felt stunned by the events that were unfolding in his parish".

He has assured that if God would call him before the case of Garabandal was finally approved, his testimony would not have been lost, as he has written it in detail and is kept in a safe place. As for the Commission appointed by the Bishop of Santander to investigate the events, it did not take Fr. Valentín into account at all. In his own words, to them "I was nobody". This situation continued over the years, especially since 1972 with Bishop Juan Antonio del Val. For this reason, Fr. Valentín later gave public testimony and his testimony has been heard in the Vatican.

It was the Bishop of Santander, Fr. Juan Antonio del Val, who in 1980 gave Conchita permission to be interviewed by Bill Nicholson's team to make a filmed documentary about the Apparitions for the British BBC and to carry out a personal interview with Conchita. This half-hour documentary entitled "Garabandal after the Visions" was broadcasted on the BBC television program "EVERYMAN" at the end of 1980, on prime time. Such was the success that the telephone lines of the studios collapsed, and the documentary had to be remitted a couple of times for the United Kingdom and still a fourth time for Ireland and numerous copies were made for many television channels.

It was also this bishop the one who authorized priests to go up to Garabandal to celebrate Holy Mass in the village Church and promoted the conduction of a new study to examine in greater depth the events of Garabandal.

June, 1961

Father Valentín attaches to his notebook the following testimony written by Conchita.

After the Rosary at 9 a. m., we were going to 'pick apples' and were sitting on the path but didn't feel like picking them anymore. [Then] we were playing marbles and we said that, 'the angel was on our right and the devil on the left.' We started to throw pebbles at the Devil and we told the Angel to stay with us. Then he [the angel] appeared to us, and I lifted up my head and let out a scream. The others, who saw me in ecstasy, looked up and said, 'Oh, an Angel!' And then we went down to the village and went to the Church. We ran into a girl, and she asked us where we had been, because we looked so pale and frightened. When we entered the church, a few girls went and told the school teacher. She told us to go there [to the place of the apparition] for the following three days and we did not see him again until Friday. The Angel was like a young boy, dressed in blue, with pink wings and brown hair. He had a very smiley face, the color of a chickpea; his hair was parted in the middle. On Monday, Fr. Valentín asked us what had happened and asked us separately. We told him all we had seen. On Monday, we did not see anything, we went there all week. On Monday, [June] 26, we saw the Angel. On June 27, Fr. Valentín came up and asked us what had happened, and we told him that we had seen him [the Angel] the same as on June 18.

SIGNED BY:

Conchita González González.

Jacintuca González González.

Mari Cruz González Madrazo.

Loli Mazón González.

This account was written by Conchita in her diary with more careful wording and can be read in the first chapter of this story.

### **About Fr. Valentín:**

**Father Valentín** resided in the neighboring town of Cosío at that time. His notes are often written the next day or later. It could be concluded from his notes that to know the Apparitions well, data of external events are not enough as in each apparition we must know the words of the Blessed Mother, the girl's questions and answers as well as what they saw and felt. What follows are some excerpts from what Fr. Valentín says in his notes:

Conchita and Mari Cruz say that the angel did exactly what I do when I give Communion. The other two, Loli and Jacinta received Communion in the Campuca, higher up than other

times. Then, the Angel showed them where the Virgin was and waving his hand, he called them to come.

They went up to the pines, at the end of the Calleja, where there is a small plain in front of the Chapel, which was called the Campuca, before starting the steep final slope that goes up to the pines. On this plain there was a rather large stone on which the Archangel St Michael once stood.

About Dr. Morales and Dr. Piñal, Doctors of the Commission:

On Tuesday July 11, Dr. Morales and Dr. Piñal arrived. I do not know the scientific opinion of the doctors. What I do know is that Dr. Morales said that on Tuesday nothing would happen, because if the girls were being persuaded by any sort of influence [regarding the apparitions], he would dissuade them. When the girls went up, he was on the path, and the girls passed by without paying any attention to him and were in the same state about 7 minutes. The next day they said, "Didn't the Carmelite say that we wouldn't see the Angel anymore?" (Dr. Morales had told them that he was a Carmelite).

#### **The girls were very happy when priests came:**

When I arrived in San Sebastián, accompanied by Fr. Gilberto, Fr. Liborio, and a student from Comillas, we came upon the girls accompanied by others, near the village. I saw that the girls were very happy. There were many people. The priests asked them many questions. At 8:30 the girls arrived at the customary place and, after making the Sign of the Cross, I saw them in the same state as always, but this time very happy. I saw them all smile and wave goodbye several times. One could see their lips moving, as if they were talking and then giving a kiss. This lasted 10 minutes and then we led them to the church. I asked them one by one and they told me that the Angel had said: "Let me see what beautiful teeth you have," and that he had also shown his teeth to them. Afterwards, I had the priests and the parents come into the sacristy and their account coincided with what [the girls] had told me. I assume there must have been about 1,000 people. They said he had kissed them on the forehead and cheeks, and that they had kissed him.

#### **When the girls were called, nothing would stop them:**

The three priests – Fr. Pedro, the priest from Guarnizo, and I – were at Conchita's house trying to distract them, thinking that they would not come to an agreement. But, at 9 o'clock they left quickly and the priests came running behind. They arrived at the usual site and remained in the usual state. I asked if they had received Communion, and they said yes – all four of them. I asked if they had spoken to the Angel and they said yes. Was it a secret? They told me no, but that the Angel had said not to tell anyone. I asked if he would return and they said yes. The following priests were present: Salvador Anguio, Pedro Llanes, José Luis Gómez, Lizaso, José Gabriel Peña, José Antonio Cabada, Cosuso, Ocejá, and Fr. Pedro.

The Angel only gave them Communion when there were no Priests in town who would do it in the Church. Besides, he told the girls that he took “consecrated” Hosts from the tabernacles of the earth.

At about a quarter to 9. The girls spent about 7 minutes in the same state as always and then they began to speak softly. I walked up close to them and I heard the following: "Do a miracle, turn the night into day" (Mari Cruz said this). Conchita said: "Do a miracle, even if it's just a tiny one." Then they said: "The priest of the secret hasn't returned. Another priest who had a cap came, one that had a coiled cord (this was Logo), and the other (Ozejo)". She also spoke of the Carmelite (Morales).

Then they talked about the things they had done these days, how their mom said they should eat more. They were like this until 9:30. Then they prayed the Rosary. They told me that they had received Communion and seen Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and that she would return the following day.

#### **About obedience:**

The girls told me that the Angel said they had to obey the priest and their parents and to live life as always, like other girls.

After having seen the girls, many people changed and believed:

The girls saw the Angel and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel. Then, they were separated as usual, Jacinta and Loli went to Ceferino's house, Mari Cruz and Conchita to Conchita's house. There were about 8 priests present, two doctors and 600 people outside – the number had never diminished, but there had been days that there were about 3,000 people on Sunday. Many came out of curiosity, but after seeing the girls they changed; I saw men crying.

#### **The Blessed Virgin Mary's dress:**

Conchita saw the Angel and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel – her dress was white with white flowers and her mantle was clear blue, her nose was like the image of the Virgin Mary in the parish church, she had black [dark] eyes and her hands were like the ones here. They were there about 30 minutes and she said that the Virgin had long hair and she wore it let down; Mari Cruz said exactly the same.

#### **The Blessed Virgin Mary appears with the Child Jesus:**

Loli and Jacinta saw Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the Child and the Angel. They said that sometimes Our Lady did not bring the Child and that she let them hold the Child, first Jacinta and then Loli. The Child was made of flesh and wore a crown and was wrapped in a blanket. They were about 18 minutes, they prayed a station of the cross and when they started to pray, the girls saw the Our Lady again. The girls affirmed that her mantle was

blue and the dress white with white flowers. She told them to go to the Campuca that afternoon where they sang the hymn to St. Michael and the Hail Mary.

First Loli and Jacinta went to the Calleja, they told me they had seen Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the Angel. At first, they were serious, with tears in their eyes, then they began to talk. They made the gesture as if they were putting the crown on the Virgin and the Child. Sometimes, it also seemed as if they had the Child in their arms.

#### **For the girls, time did not seem to exist:**

Once again one of the girls said: "Stay here a bit longer, you've only been here for a minute." It seems that the Virgin had then replied that she had been there an hour and fifteen minutes (that time was exact). The girls told me they had seen Our Lady that afternoon. Then, they received Communion at Mass and not in the Calleja.

They made the gesture of taking the Child in their arms, of kissing Him several times as the Virgin did with them. The girls put on the crown and repeatedly asked her not to go. For several days now, they told me, the Virgin said she would appear to them wherever they were. Yesterday they mentioned that Conchita had seen Our Lady again. She appeared to Mari Cruz near the house and stayed for about 25 minutes.

These paragraphs have been extracted from Fr. Valentin's notes.

#### **Interview with the parish priest Valentín Marichalar Torres.**

On June 15, 1976, after a long period of silence in obedience to his superiors, the Parish priest of Cosío and Garabandal during the Apparitions gives his first public testimony of the facts.

It is of great importance because Father Valentín is one of the most significant witnesses of the Apparitions. A great observer and impartial witness of the truth of the facts and he knew girls and their families very well.

**Note:** Some questions and answers do not belong to a single interview but to another one done much later in which Fr. Valentín gave a clearer and definitive answer.

Q: Were you the Parish priest of Cosío and Garabandal before the apparitions?

A: Yes, in 1942 I was appointed parish priest of the two parishes. This was twenty years before the apparitions took place. As a priest I baptized all the girls and gave them their First Communion. I married Lolita's parents (Mari Loli Mazón). The climb to Garabandal from Cosío was very difficult then.

Q: Before the Apparitions, did you teach the children the catechism?

A: Yes, I taught them the catechism twice a week.

One day, in the month of June, I spoke about the Heart of Jesus and the twelve promises of the Sacred Heart. I skipped two or three because I did not remember them at all and I told them "the rest on Sunday". So, I asked a boy, "Do you have Guardian Angel?", he said "I do not know what an Angel is". Then, I will explain it to you.

The following Sunday the Angel appeared to four of the girls. This is why some people said that the Angel appeared to them because I had told them about the Guardian Angel during the catechism. But that was not the reason since he had talked almost all the time of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. About the Guardian Angel I just talked a little and the whole morning about the Sacred Heart. Thus, if it had been for the catechism, the Heart of Jesus would have appeared.

Q: During the Apparitions, how did you question the girls?

A: I took the girls to the sacristy, one at a time. I asked them details of how they had seen the Blessed Virgin, each one said the same thing. I tried to mislead them by saying, "Well, no. The other girls said that the Child wore small shoes on his feet". I did it to see if they contradicted each other, but I could never find contradictions. They always described their [those of Our Lady and Child Jesus] clothes and everything in the same way. I informed the Bishop of what was happening each day.

Q: Do you have a copy of these reports?

A: Yes.

Q: Before the Apparitions, were the seers better than the other girls in the town?

A: Before the apparitions, they were the same as the other girls.

Q: During the Apparitions, did you notice any spiritual progress in the seers?

A: At the beginning, the first year, a lot. Later, when many people came, they changed a bit. When the avalanche of people ended they began to improve again.

Q: When the visionaries were 18 or 19 years old they turned more spiritual than the others in the town?

A: There was not much difference, almost the same, because all the girls in the town were very good.

Q: Have you ever asked the Blessed Virgin to give you some sign as proof?

A: Yes, Our Lady gave me a special test for me one day at one o'clock in the morning. I was very tired, and I thought, "Well, may the Virgin make it clear to me as I can't handle this anymore". I asked Our Lady the following: that the girls would come that same night while I was sleeping and that they would wake me up and give me the crucifix to kiss. Then, I went to bed and at four o'clock in the morning, Mari Loli, in ecstasy, accompanied by the writer Sanchez Ventura and a small group of people, knocked at the bedroom door. When I opened it, she turned her smiley face towards me, and still in ecstasy, she extended her arm with the crucifix to me to kiss it. This was a very clear test for me. How is it that the girl came to my room without knowing that I was there that day? It was very difficult because I had moved three days before and neither Mari Loli nor her family knew where I was or where I lived. They thought I was in my previous house. Besides, how did she know what room I was in as there were four rooms with the same doors? I was on the third when she knocked at the door. How did Mari Loli know I was there?

Q: Did you have any other test?

A: Yes. On one occasion, I was sent for a season to another town and I said to myself, "let's see what happens". I was worried, because one day the girls said that until a certain date there would be no more appearances, for about two months, and I would say to myself: "if I can't go back I won't be able to prove it and testify as before. Let's see what happens". I left and later when I was back, on the exact date the girls had announced, the apparitions began again.

Q: Have you had any doubts about the apparitions?

A: No, not at all as far as facts are concerned.

I cannot say that everything is supernatural, because I was not always there to see everything. However, I can say with absolute certainty that it is supernatural. For me there is no doubt that the apparitions are true.

Q: Have you been questioned by the Bishop during the Apparitions or by the commission?

A: I have never been questioned by the Bishop. He wanted me to sign a statement, but I told him that I still could not sign anything in one way or another until I saw how things developed. Once, the commission tried to give me a vacation. They suggested "that so that people don't think we're pressuring you, you should make a written request and we'll give you a vacation". I answered: "Look, if you send me out, I'll go but I won't ask for it." It seemed as if they were trying to blackmail me. I respected the Bishop a lot, but when it was necessary to say "no", I said it clearly.

Q: Did you detect deficiencies in the way the commission carried out their investigations?

A: Yes, nothing was done well. On one occasion, a psychiatrist from Madrid came to examine the girls. He arrived at ten o'clock at night and the girls were already in bed. He said: "Look, they forced me to come here." I asked him if he wanted to see the girls, even when they were in bed. I think he only saw one of them, but when he wrote his report he said he had seen them all and that was a lie. I cannot remember his name, but he is a professor of psychiatry.

Q: Conchita said that during the interrogations she was never sworn on the Bible, did you know any of this?

A: That's what she told me, there were no oaths. They tried for hours to make her say what she did not want and although the girl was very intelligent, the Bishop and those around him were smarter than her. There were times when they managed to make her deny them [the apparitions]. They got her to say things she did not mean to say.

Q: Have you ever been asked to testify under oath?

A: Never. We understood that the commission was doing everything possible to end this by both licit or illicit means. They wanted to end the apparitions by all means because they did not believe in them.

Q: Did not the commission have sensitivity for the souls or for the wishes of the Virgin?

A: No. The message of the Blessed Virgin had been fulfilled. It was the fulfillment of the prophecy according to which many Bishops and priests go down the path of perdition.

Q: Did you see the Miracle of Visible Host?

A: No, I did not see it. That night, it was already late and I retired because I was somewhat tired. There were eight priests present, one was a Jesuit and the other a priest of the diocese. I told them, "Look what happens." Shortly after I had gone to bed they called me and said: "It has been done and we have been witnesses". Everything happened as the Conchita said it would happen. It was a quarter to one in the morning, but due to the sun there was another hour, officially it was still the scheduled day, July 18, 1962.

Q: How did the news of the Miracle affect you?

A: I was very impressed.

Q: What part of the Message impressed you most?

A: The girls, at that time, had the concept that each priest was like a saint. And for the girls what the message said and what I myself heard, "That the Church was going the wrong way, ... the priests, oh! ... and the bishops, oh! ... and also cardinals..." for me this was definitive, because due to all the respect that the girls had for the priests it was impossible for them to think about it. In other words, they believed that priests could not sin.

Q: In your opinion, how is it that many cardinals, bishops and priests, according to the message, are on the road to perdition?

A: It's very clear, because many are doing things the other way around. There are many who deny the Eucharist, the Virginity of Our Lady and the Holiness of the Pope. They deny all this.

Q: Do you think that the prophecy stating that "many cardinals, bishops and priests are on the path of perdition" has been fulfilled?

A: Yes, yes, it has been fulfilled accurately. It was impossible for the girls to know that because at that time even I did not know it myself.

Q: Did the appearances of Garabandal helped you become a better priest?

A: Indeed!

Q: Do you wait for the Warning and the Miracle?

A: I wait for them, because these things must have a perfect ending, that is, the Blessed Virgin does not leave things in the air. She will do something so that everything ends well. She has to finish and complete what she started.

Q: Do you know anything interesting that took place during the Apparitions and that was not written in the books about Garabandal?

A: Of course. There are many and many small details, but I do not know if they are in the books or not. For example, in an apparition the girls presented the Virgin a crucifix made of mother-of-pearl. The girls were heard to say "Ah! It's a crucifix from Burgos". How could the girls know, if they did not even know that such a crucifix existed? Another day, when Conchita was in ecstasy, I heard her say, "Ah, there are two priests here, yes, Fr. Valentín and another." I looked behind me but I did not see any priest. The girl had said that there were two priests. How could she know of the other priest if he came dressed as a civilian? Once a Dominican priest came dressed as a civilian and was walking around the town. He entered into Conchita's house while she was in ecstasy. He carried a missionary crucifix with him. He offered it to Conchita so that the Virgin could kiss it. In ecstasy Conchita asked: "How come you come dressed like that if you are much better dressed in white?". On another occasion a priest came on a bus from Oviedo. He came because people wanted him to come, since he still did not believe anything. One of the girls began offering the crucifix to everyone to be kissed. Later he told me that he had thought, "If all this is supernatural, the girl'll return to her normal state when she comes to me." When she reached him, she returned to his normal state. He withdraws to one side and began to cry. Then, people came to ask him why he was crying? He replied: "Please, leave me, this is all very serious." There are thousands of cases like these.

Q: It is said that you have met Father Luis Andreu, the priest who saw the Great Miracle that will come. Can you tell us what he said the day he saw the great miracle and that he later died of happiness?

A: Yes, Father Luis came several times. He never said a word. He came, observed the facts, took notes and left. He never said anything until that his last day. On that day, August 8, 1961, I had to go and say goodbye to a niece of mine who was a nun. When Father Luis arrived in Cosío, I told him: "Here is the key to the Church of San Sebastián where you can say Mass. I won't be there and during the afternoon you can stay there." Fr. Luis returned to Cosío at midnight. In the square of Cosío he told me: "Today I had a very strong test, what the girls say is true, for me there is no doubt that it is supernatural". Then he left for Reinosa and died during the trip. These were his last words to me. I was very surprised because he had never said anything before.

Q: Is there anything you would like to say to those who spread the message of Garabandal?  
A: The Message must be known throughout the world. Of course, the most important thing is to fulfill it. We do not gain anything by making the message known if we do not comply.

**END**

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## PHENOMENA OF GARABANDAL, 18 YEARS LATER BY DR. RICARDO PUNCERNAU, NEUROPSYCHIATRIST, FUNDER OF A.E.I.P.

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During these times in which the world is “confused” at the ecclesiastical, the international, the social, the familiar, and the personal level and, consequently it is full of injustice and egoism, we have dared to write these lines. These are a series of simple stories that deal with the famous happenings of Garabandal as seen through the prism of a Christian doctor.

Since I am Christian, I am obligated to strictly tell the truth, without adornment, at least in the essence of the narration. At least consciously, I have not removed anything of what I remember. These series of simple stories are personal but related to the story of Garabandal at the same time. These are things I have never told before, yet necessary to be said.

Next year, 1975, is the Holy Year.

Is there a better occasion to exhume events that seem to have been buried forever, but which have actually never been so?

It is clear that this little book has been written for those who already know the story of Garabandal. If not, I fear that they will not understand or value this testimony.

Barcelona, December 1974.

Dr. R. P.

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Q: Why did I make so many trips to Garabandal?

A: Well, I don't really know...Garabandal is eight hundred kilometers away from Barcelona, that is where I live and have my neuropsychiatry practice. My good friend Jacinto Maristany often urged me to go there. But I thought to myself: “I'm not going to see hysterics, I've already seen enough in my profession as a doctor.”

Nevertheless...one night after dinner, he called me on the phone and told me (I didn't have my own car at that time) that Mercedes Salisachs, the writer, was leaving to Garabandal at four in the morning. She would be waiting for me with the car at the corner of Enrique Granados and Paris in case I wanted to join them. I answered that I would think about it... maybe yes... but I told them that if I was not there at four, they should not to wait for me any longer.

Not anyone would make me get up at three thirty to be ready at four in order to go on an adventure seeking hysterical girls. Nevertheless, at night when we were going to bed, I told my wife about my friend's pilgrimage. We knelt at the foot of our matrimonial bed to pray our short nightly prayers as usual. Suddenly, once we had finished, my wife opened the closet, took out the camera, and to my surprise, she gave it to me saying:

— Take it... go to Garabandal and take a lot of pictures...

That unusual gesture from my wife, who doesn't ever leave me, surprised me. How strange...?

— You can take Margarita with you ... Margarita is the oldest girl... She was about eight years old then.

— But...

— But nothing, you're going to Garabandal... Little Margarita was absolutely excited about this unexpected trip. At the end, without giving it a second thought by 4 a. m. we were in Mercedes Salisachs's car heading to Garabandal. It was the first of ten or twelve trips I made afterwards.

I still remember the hotel in Zaragoza where we stopped, and Mercedes Salisachs invited us to eat. We ate Cuban rice, one of my favorite dishes. In the afternoon, we continued with great speed and by sunset we had arrived in Garabandal. How delightful the countryside was! How enchanting pure air! But the road with cars from Cosio to Garabandal was a disaster!

The car slipped and then slid next to the cliff. We went up as we were all pushing the car up the steep hill, which was like the climb to Naranjo from Bulnes by the Northern wall, the most difficult. Once we had passed the two hundred meters of the climb, and since Garabandal was near, I decided to walk the rest of the way. The others stayed in the car until the road flattened. I walked enjoying the mountain scenery, I was calmed after so much hard work with the car.

The road had been widened a little, so now it was easier to go through it. To the left there was a small rock stuck out of the ground. Then, I saw a figure in white sitting upon it about three hundred meters away. Her mother was with her, but she had gone to cut or collect vegetables from a neighbor, or something. The girl was about thirteen or fourteen years old, maybe more, maybe less, and she stared at me without moving. It was, at least for me, a special piercing gaze. Somehow, I knew she was one of the seers of Garabandal.

I don't know how I knew it, but I knew it. Her white dress stood out against the green grass of the field. Her figure seemed very kind to me on that afternoon; it was almost twilight, and it was the first contact I had with someone from Garabandal. The girl was nothing less than the most important person related to the strange apparitions I had been told. Once I met her, the most curious and surprising thing was that after telling her I had already seen her in the field, she answered deliberately:

— I also saw you...

I thought to myself: "Watch out doctor, don't be fooled..." But the truth is that I was astonished by her answer.

— "I also saw you..."

I continued walking. I passed a curve in the road and I could see Garabandal. Its houses were ancient and picturesque. In front of a square, underneath a solitary tree, Mercedes Salisachs had parked the car.

We were accommodated in one of the last houses of the town, almost to the outskirts, to be able to sleep. It was a branch of the "Puncernau's hotel," as I will explain later. The muddy streets of the village were illuminated by weak bulbs and full of stones and debris.

## II

As soon as Mercedes Salisachs disappeared, I found myself a little lost in the village, even when I was with my daughter. At the end of the main road, I found Ceferino's tavern. Ceferino was not only the Mayor of the town at that time but also Mari Loli's father. Ceferino and a group of friends gathered in front of the tavern. When we approached the group, the men looked at us suspiciously. I tried to start a conversation, but when I told them I was a doctor, they stepped back a little. Apparently, the doctors did not enjoy very

good reputation. Their reticence, however, did not take away their kindness and good manners. Ceferino seemed to me a worthy man, somewhat rough and mocking, but like most people of Garabandal with a heart of gold. I still remember that later on, when we became friends, he would go fishing trout in the river in both open and closed seasons in order to give it to me. I have never eaten better trout than in Ceferino's house.

After a little while, the rumor spread that Conchita had fallen into ecstasy. Shortly after, so did Jacinta and Mari Loli and finally Mari-Cruz. In a state of trance, the four girls gathered and then they continued praying the Rosary together and the people that followed them answered. I took a look at the curious procession and went to Ceferino's tavern to drink a coke. In the tavern there was a Uruguayan girl who worked at the "Folies Bergère" in Paris. Soon we engaged in a conversation. She told me that she neither believed in the alleged apparitions nor in anything related to religion. She had gone to Garabandal just out of sheer curiosity. After a while I suggested going outside to see what happened with the visionaries. We saw them from a distance, crouched in the shadow of a house, as they were leading the Rosary towards the little village Church.

From where we were hidden we saw what happened. Suddenly, Conchita, in a trance, departed from the procession and started walking normally, but with unusual speed, towards us, even though we were hidden in the shadow of the wall of a house.

She carried a small crucifix in her hand. I thought: "she knows that you're a doctor and now she has come to "put on the show" for you. But how could she have seen you?" But, no, she went toward my companion and put the crucifix to her lips and made her kiss it three times. The Virgin Mary is also the Mother of the dancers of the "Folies Bergère." After that, Conchita joined the others and continued to pray the Rosary. My companion, the dancer, began to cry with great emotional sobs, she was so inconsolable that I thought she would have an attack. I accompanied her to the wooden benches that were outside Ceferino's tavern. People joined us and tried to calm her. Finally, she was able to explain that she had thought "in her mind" that "if this is true that the Virgin is appearing, then let one of the girls come and give me proof" and "as soon as I had thought this, Conchita came running to give me the crucifix. I didn't want it and I held back her hand. But she gave me the cross with such force and placed it to my lips, so that I had to kiss it. Once, twice, three times, and I'm the incredulous one, the atheist, who doesn't believe in anything. I'm deeply moved."

I found this woman later on the train back to Bilbao. And because we wrote a few times, I know that she left the "Folies Bergère" and returned with his family to Uruguay.

This was the first experience of telepathy or instant clairvoyance I observed in Garabandal. My daughter Margarita came to me to say that she was tired. It was past midnight. I accompanied her to our room and I waited while she got into bed. I sat at the foot of the bed at least until she fell asleep.

After a little while she said to me:

— "Dad... if you want you can go... I'm not afraid here."

— "Really?"

— "Yes, don't worry..." I kissed her, wished her a good night and left her sleeping peacefully.

I went out to the narrow streets. It was a cold, starry night. The stars were shining for a Barcelonan visitor, with an unusual brilliance. I thought about whether it was possible that the Mother of Heaven looked over and protected the inhabitants and passersby in

Garabandal with outstretched arms. My children are not the fearful kind. Nevertheless, for a girl of eight years old, to stay by herself so calmly in the outskirts of an unknown village did not cease to surprise me.

Walking through the dark and lonely alleys of the town, I also experienced this sense of protection. Even with the number of people who have climbed to Garabandal, nothing unpleasant has ever happened, as far as I know.

Once a truck full of workers fell off of a cliff into a river, but no one was injured. They only had a few minor scratches. And it should be pointed out that in those times the road was so bad it could have killed an entire army, no matter how motorized it was.

I continued observing the girls' trances, but I refused to respond to the Rosary. It might be a fraud and I did not want to cooperate with it. My role as doctor was to observe the events coldly.

But what deliberate coldness of heart could resist the friendly warmth of Garabandal?

### III

I found the girls in front of the closed doors of the little Church. They stayed there for a while as if requesting an audience to enter. Then, without leaving the state of trance, they turned around and extended their arms in a cross.

— “They are going to do the plane... they are going to do the plane.”

— I heard this murmured among the people who accompanied them. It seemed like a vulgar expression to me. But, with their arms extended they ran through the streets of almost the entire village. It was very curious because it gave the impression that they moved in a quick pace, as though it were a movie in ‘slow motion’, like pseudo-levitation, but the speed was incredible, so fast that the young and strong boys of the village could not keep up with them, though they tried with all of their might.

This curious way of running reminded me of the "long som pa" of the Tibetans in a state of hypnosis. I think there are movies filmed about it using spotlights. The "long som pa" is a special march of self-hypnosis of the Tibetans in a state of trance, which allows them to travel great distances at full speed and without getting tired. They walk as if they flew, with rhythmic movements. It is, in short, a parapsychological phenomenon in a state of self-hypnosis.

After running through the entire village, they returned to a normal pace and then came out of the trance smiling.

At this point, we should address the entrance into the trance and their exit from it. According to the girls, there were three calls. The first was like a “come,” accompanied by a feeling of happiness, the second was a “come... run... come” with much greater joy and much more compelling. The third call corresponded to their sudden entrance in ecstasy.

The girls would say, “Now I have one call,” “now I have two calls.” The spaces of time between the calls were completely irregular. Once, when I knew that they had already had two calls, I talked to them and tried to distract them and make them talk about something that interested them. Sometimes in the middle of a word they would suddenly fall on their knees in a state of trance, even though they seemed interested in what they were saying. This drew my attention. It is not the normal way of entering into a trance if the person is not conditioned with a sign. Among the attendants no one was capable of understanding this or even knowing what it meant.

### IV

More than once we had gone with Conchita to the pastures to bring food to one of her brothers called Aniceto. Sometimes we shared meals with them. With Aniceto, we had gone until we could see Tudanca from the highest point of the pasture. He had organized a stampede of wild horses that we could enjoy. During this, Conchita had stayed to prepare dinner. We all went on this excursion a little reluctantly; we would have preferred to have stayed at Conchita's side. We hadn't had enough of her company in the long walk; we wanted more.

She was a charming, beautiful and playful girl in the good sense of the word. She was also intelligent and had an excellent sense of humor. She did not have any prudishness or foolishness; she was completely normal. She was funny and kind, she was a lovable girl.

I had seen many people, men and women, including priests, who were completely captivated by her. She had an exquisite correctness with everything that could mean the slightest hint of impurity. In general, people were fascinated with her, and except for a couple of unfortunate events, they always behaved with great respect. There was an atmosphere of pure and immaculate Christian love, of the true love that comes from our Heavenly Mother's love.

On the way back, we would engage in all the imaginable childish games, and we laughed like fools, but I never noticed the slightest hint of unhealthy mischief. Perhaps this is why she was so charming. We used to throw stones at each other as jokes and we did championships to see who was taller. We both cheated, stealthily putting on tiptoe.

At some point, however, she remained serious and absent as though she had some special internal experience.

This was the best way to get to know Conchita, better than doing exams and tests on her, even though I have also carried them out. The same could be said of Jacinta, Mari-Loli and Mari-Cruz.

The girls were bound together by their Castilian or mountain gallantry and limitless sympathy. Once Mari Loli told me that when she was little, she was annoyed because people followed her everywhere day and night and she could not leave them to use the bathroom in peace.

Everything was simple and normal. I never observed them attempting to "play little saints." And of course, I will not name those disgraceful people who attempted to behave improperly with Conchita, behavior she herself immediately cut off.

It was curious to observe, as I said before, that everyone wanted to be in the company of these girls: men and women, the young and the old, priests and laypeople. No doubt, this love was transferred by the Blessed Virgin. But in many cases, such love did not transcend, but it stayed in the girls themselves, something that seems very human and natural to me. When Mari Cruz did not have apparitions anymore and the other girls did, I felt sorry for her, and I saw that she was sad because of it. I gave her my wedding ring so she could give it to the Virgin. I stayed in Garabandal for three and a half days on that trip. The girl was very happy and put my ring on one of her fingers. Three days passed and Mari Cruz did not have an apparition; she did not enter a trance. The night before the day I was leaving, I said: "you have to return my ring, because I'm leaving at three in the morning". "Leave it with me a little longer... maybe I have an apparition tonight", she said. I left it to her. The other three girls entered into ecstasy. They walked in the trance arm in arm. Mari Cruz went near them and took one of the girl's arms, lifted her head and walked ten or twelve steps to see if she would enter into a trance as well. But there was no trance. She released

her arm and without saying a word, she sadly returned my ring and walked away with the head lowered.

I must explain that my ring was kissed in another occasion in one of Conchita's ecstasies. I explain this to make the point that the ecstasies did not occur when the girls wanted. The transparent behavior of Mari Cruz could not deceive anyone. I had given her the ring out of pure love towards the girl because I felt pity for her. Her sadness was not a trick as well as the apparitions.

## V

On one of the excursions to the field, I stayed to eat because Serafín, Conchita's older brother, had invited me. My son Augusto was invited to drink milk as soon as the cow was milked, but he could not digest it, or maybe it made him nauseated, and he vomited. He became sick and he went down to the village where my wife Julia was.

I stayed alone with Serafín and we ate in the stable with the cows. After that, I tried to get him to talk, because it was believed he knew from Conchita when 'the Warning' would take place. I came to the conclusion that if he did know, he did not want to say it.

The only thing I understood clearly was that the Warning would be preceded by a special event in the Church. After many questions and deductions, it seemed to me that it would be some kind of Schism; at least this is how I understood it.

Serafín told me that in the winter he would spend some months without going down to the village. I asked him how he spent the time and he said that he thought and read from three to four novels.

Serafín was a very kind and pleasant man. He was doubtful about what was happening to his sister. He repeated to me what Ancieta (their mother) had said: Conchita was very fond of telling jokes, which she sometimes took to the extreme. He gave, however, the impression of being rather disoriented in the face of these unusual events. It happened to him as it did to me, that he believed, as he told Conchita, I "believe for five minutes, then I doubt for five minutes."

But whatever it was, I noticed a religious fervor growing in me.

At dusk, I went down alone towards the village. I stopped for a moment, where someone, I don't know who, according to Conchita had given birth to a child, right there on top of a rock.

I prayed a Hail Mary as I passed the slope, where huge stones sometimes slid, forming a kind of "river of stones". I crossed before the creek and I contemplated the harsh and wild countryside. And when I came near Ancieta's house, there was the usual social gathering at sunset time on the wooden bench attached to the wall of the house, whose soul was no one else but Conchita herself.

One or another clingy woman would always be holding her by the arm, as though she were a living relic. At the gathering you could talk about everything or about nothing at all. There were those who accepted the trivial, normal conversation, but there were others, among them maybe a priest, who did not stop poking, asking and making the poor girl dizzy.

What saintly patience! Conchita's grandfather frequently sat on the wooden bench during these conversations. He was a kind, merry old man.

Anyway, Conchita knew how to free herself from impertinent visitors and she would go up to her room or go out to play "jump rope."

## VI

This narration has no more merit than within our human limitations, within what our senses allow us to know, within the true and correct use of the intelligence that God has given us, to tell the truth and nothing but the truth.

And I do not tell the whole truth because if I did, this story would never ending.

Without any other concern, I write unreservedly about the circumstances that I remember well and clearly. I write as a Christian doctor, but more as a doctor than as a Christian. I hope that this does not scandalize any fanatic, as it has happened on other occasions.

But what is truly worthy of observation and study is that no one ever gets tired of talking about Garabandal. Furthermore, these chats, which sometimes are a repetition of the ones before, are never tedious and are accompanied by a weird inner joy both for speakers and listeners.

My wife has heard many times the same conference talk, and she keeps on telling me she could continue listening to me her whole life.

She listens to things that sometimes she knows better than me. I get absolutely annoyed when I have to repeat the same medical or paramedic conference again and again. I avoid them like the plague. It is beyond my strength.

Nevertheless, in the case of Garabandal, I do not grow weary; it pleases me and gives me unusual happiness. It is like a binge of joy not only during the conferences, but also in meetings or social gatherings. I usually have to be warned about the time, if not I would talk about Garabandal until three or four in the morning.

The most curious thing is that it was an eternal “recapitulation” of the same subjects. Besides, the devil was probably responsible for provoking some kind of unhealthy jealousy, such as having been the first to find out about something, of enjoying more intimacy with the girls or being in possession of some secret unknown to others. Such presumption and jealousy were so stupid, that they could only be the work of ‘the Tempter.’

But what is certain is that I have given about ninety conferences about Garabandal, most of them with the graphic collaboration of David Clúa, without getting tired.

And I always have to shorten them, because if not I fear the conferences will become endless and overwhelming. I just focus on the main facts as I do in this piece of writing. This affection for everything related to Garabandal was transmitted in a spontaneous way to all the followers of Garabandal, except for half a dozen fanatics, who with all the good faith, I am sure, went too far.

On the occasion of a brief essay that I wrote, in which, to demonstrate the little appreciation we had for Our Mother’s things, I poured some drops of ink on it. After that, I received ferocious letters, improper for Christians, which I still have.

But apart from this little group of fanatics, the rest of the followers of Garabandal seem sensitive and very good people who believed in the events without any doubt. Not to mention the people of the village, who in spite of all the suspicions (“no one is a prophet in his own land”) and doubts, were such good people that I would have loved to live among them.

Later, Dr. Sanjuán Nadal helped me in this task of promoting Garabandal.

## VII

I made the second trip to Garabandal with my wife and oldest son, Augusto. My wife was very disappointed, and everything seemed very trivial to her. My son Augusto, who was very serious and steady, hardly say anything.

My wife Julia gave her wedding ring to Mari Loli while she was in ecstasy so that the girl would give it to the Most Holy Virgin to have it kissed. Since her finger was swollen and it would not come off, the girl took Julia's hand and turned it so the Virgin could kiss the wedding ring "in its place."

I repeat that it seemed childish and weak to her. Nevertheless, in one of their races to the pines (which I will talk about later), the girls stopped in front of the Church door as usual and Julia touched one of the girls' cheek (I think it was Mari Loli's). And while we were all sweating and tired, according to my wife's happy comment, Mari Loli's cheeks were like "a peach that had just been taken out of the fridge."

As I said, the first time I went alone (with little Margarita), I met the girl from the "Folies Bergère" on the train between Santander and Bilbao. We sat together and began to chat about nothing transcendental. During the course of the conversation, since I was very warm, she offered me a paper tissue full of cologne to refresh my arms and forehead. Even though I do not like perfumes very much, I accepted, and I passed it over my arms and hands. We said goodbye in Bilbao, and we exchanged addresses and began to write each other about Garabandal. My daughter and I had a three hour wait before taking the express to Barcelona, so we decided to go for a small walk in Bilbao.

At the scheduled time, we boarded the overnight train wagon and went to eat at the restaurant wagon. Everything was new to Margarita, and she enjoyed it greatly. It was during the dinner that I began to notice a smell. It seemed to come from my left arm and hand.

At the beginning, I attributed it to the cologne from the dancer at the "Folies Bergère". Already in our apartment I noticed the smell again. Then I realized that it came and went in spurts. It was very intense, like sandalwood. It only smelled on the left side. This lasted for about two minutes, and then it disappeared. I did not have fixed intervals.

I told myself, it was a suggestive thing, so I did not even tell Margarita. I recognized that the next gust of strong fragrance was coming from the ring that had been kissed by the Virgin. At least it was the place where it came out strongest. Inside me I was ashamed to let myself be hinted at like a hysteric.

I did not say anything to anyone, but the gusts of sandalwood odor (at least that is what it seemed to me) became very intense little by little, in the least expected moment.

The next day, the strange fragrance repeated at irregular intervals. It was very strong. When we got home, we had just enough time to get ready and then we got on a train to Caldetas, where my family was vacationing. Finally, I secretly told my wife about the fragrance. Naturally, she thought I was crazy. Nevertheless, that same night, when we were already undressing for bed, the fragrance came. I put my hand next to Julia and I said:

— "Take it now, smell it ..."

She took my hand just to make me happy, convinced that I was mad. I put the ring to her nose and when, according to her, she was about to tell me:

— "But I don't smell anything..."

Instead, I saw her become pale like the white wall in our bedroom, and she was unable to articulate any word because she was absolutely overwhelmed with emotion.

— Well, yes... yes, it smells... like sandalwood...

The following day when we were on the beach, the fragrance returned stronger than ever. I was surprised that people did not come to ask me what it was. My son Augusto was at the edge of the water with me. “Smell this”, I told him.

— He answered with his usual seriousness:

— Yes, this smells... I don't know of what, but it smells very strong...

He did not pay any more attention and went into the water. That was the last time I noticed the strange smell. After that, never happened again. In spite of the fragrance, my wife continued with her doubts until an unusual phenomenon occurred to her as follows.

## VIII

Julia, my wife, only went to Garabandal once. Fr. Alba, my son Augusto, Sr. Serra, and a magnificent driver, Sr Pedro, came with us on that trip. Fr. Retenaga never came with me nor did Dr. Ortiz ever observe any medical examination that I had performed on the girls. I want to state that Dr. Celestino Ortiz Pérez has always deserved all my respect, trust and sympathy. The only thing I would say is that he is excessively emotional. Such emotion is a product of his natural goodness.

Julia returned disappointed from that trip. It seemed to her, like to the famous Bishop Puchol, a child's play. The rest of the family was in Caldetas for the summer. Julia immediately went there without making a stop in Barcelona. And, I went up the following Saturday.

I was astonished when I found her completely changed with respect to Garabandal. She told me that the day before, while walking through the leafy municipal park of Caldetas full of hybrid banana trees, at the most unexpected moment, she felt absent from reality and moved to relive everything about Garabandal. It was as though she was sleepwalking, and as though the people and things in the park were unreal.

All of this, with great certainty about all of the things of Garabandal, with an immense growth in her love for the Virgin, with a very secure and thrilling emotion.

— “I have always loved the Virgin... but what do you want me to tell you... but now...”

— she told me.

This state lasted a few moments but much more in terms internal and psychological time. Since then, she was convinced of the truth of Garabandal and everything it means, and it entails. She was convinced and she continues that way. She has never doubted again.

Along with this phenomenon there was a remarkable increase in spiritual love in our marriage, accompanied by a rare sense of inner joy, which I dare to qualify as supernatural. Unfortunately, this state lasted only four or five days. Then everything returned to normal. In order to avoid confusion regarding Scientific Parapsychology, I do nothing but to narrate the facts without looking for any scientific explanation. However, I do have these explanations, which are available to anyone who would requests them.

Here I just want to emphasize a point after having weighed, thought about and observed consciously all the facts, I came up with the following conclusion: In Garabandal there has never existed any other causing agent than the Most Holy Virgin. There was no hypnosis, no person acting as such.

At the time of writing these lines, I am the Vice President of the Spanish Society of Sophronology and Psychosomatic Medicine and the President of the Spanish Association of Parapsychologic Investigations. So, I do understand about these things.

## IX

In Garabandal, it is necessary to be humble. I had arrived in the village that same afternoon and I had the intention of examining Conchita, not only from a neurological point of view, but also from a psychiatric stance.

At the latter hours of the afternoon, I went to Conchita's house; this is the time when the girl was usually there, not to perform the examination, but at least to schedule it for the following day.

Everyone has the right to be in a bad mood sometimes. I entered into Aniceta's Kitchen to explain my purpose to Conchita. But as soon as I began to talk, her mother told me to leave. I was stunned and left.

Nothing like this had ever happened to me before. Aniceta and Conchita had always treated me with very kindly. As I will explain later, I had already examined the other girls and I had talked to Conchita about examining her as well later.

I went to have dinner; we had the usual tortilla and a little sausage, and then I went back to the "Puncernau's hotel," which was how we jokingly called the house. It was the first house on the Main Street, and it belonged to two brothers, who were filled with goodness and sincerity.

I cannot deny that after this fiasco with Aniceta, I was in a bad mood.

After that, I calmed down and thought, if all this comes from God, everything will be done, and if it is not suitable or it is not from God, then one exam would not make the difference. That is, I accepted what God gave with humility. I slept very well. After my breakfast of a great coffee with milk, I set out to go for a walk around the town, without a fixed route. On one of the streets, I ran face to face into Aniceta.

— "What did you want last night...?"

— "To examine your daughter... "

— "Come with me... I think she's in the house now..." We went to her house.

— "Conchita... Conchita... Dr. Puncernau wants to examine you. Go up, doctor." Conchita had placed two chairs facing each other at the side of her bed. We left the door open. Aniceta rummaged around the house and sometimes she came upstairs to look for something and to watch what we were doing without saying a word.

— Before anything else, take off your shoes and sit on the bed. I want to emphasize that she had clean feet. I examined her reflexes, balance, external and internal sensibility, motor system, cerebellum, cranium, etc. Then, when she was sitting in the chair, I finished the neurological exam. Afterwards, I carried out both the Koch and the Rorschach tests. The Rorschach test was something amazing, at an incredible speed Conchita gave more than 70 answers in a completely logical way. The Wechier-Bellvue test reported a score of superior intelligence.

To my great delight we were together in her room for more than two hours. After a while, I was silent and she asked me:

— What are you thinking about, doctor?

— I was thinking... that it is a pleasure to be here with you...

There was not the least shadow of bad thought in my response. I answered simply with the truth, and I do not regret it. Her eyes, a little playful and joyful seemed to say to me: "Don't take it so seriously, doctor" But the truth is that it was a pleasant experience being there.

## X

The foretold doubts and denials of the visionaries are well known to the followers of Garabandal. How can one proceed in this study?

The first issue we should consider is if the explanations could be presented in such simple terms:

- a) It all had been a simple children's game.
- b) The girls repented of their game and finally confessed the truth.

Based on medical studies, the first affirmation is unacceptable. Even in the case that the girls could have added "something" of their own, it is very unlikely that ALL of it was a children's game.

The doctors belonging to the assigned Commission, in my opinion, had sufficient scientific expertise to discover a childish trick from the first moment.

Those states of ecstatic trance, with the loss of sensibility and the senses, the abolition of motor reflexes and palpebral occlusion, the muscular plasticity during the trances, the resistance to fatigue, the exact changes of emotional expression in the faces of the four girls (without any kind of contact) in the same instant, etc. These facts cannot be considered a girls' game at all.

The medical history of the events of Garabandal, of which there are abundant graphic testimonies, is unquestionable.

How to explain the girls' omissions, doubts and negations of Garabandal?

The process by which the content of past perceptions is remembered, that is to say, becomes conscious again, without going through a new perception. This is what we call memory or mnesic phenomenon.

In the girls of Garabandal, these memory failures were not caused by organic, vascular, circulatory or tumor disorders, nor by biological or metabolic disorders of the physiology of the neurons.

From a psychic point of view, these memory failures could be due:

- a) to an incorrect capture by intellectual obtundation.
  - b) to a lack of fixation of perception, more or less intense, as would be the case of illusions, pseudo-representations, pseudo-hallucinations, eidetic images, etc.
  - c) to a destruction of the mnemonic circuit of evocation, for causes of psychic type, such as great emotions, psychic pressures, fear, intense effective problems, brainwashing, etc.
- In sections a and b, the image lacks vivacity, stability and persistence. On the other hand, in real or hallucinatory representations, the recollection, the memory of the fact is stable, tenacious, clear, persistent. In Garabandal, in front of blurred memories and in front of lost memories of their visions, the seers have perfectly clear memories, both visual, auditory and tactile. It was therefore a systematized and localized amnesia. They remember perfectly well the rest of their lives. In relation, in the apparitions the girls have a lacunar type memory loss, with disappeared memories, blurred memories and completely clear memories. These contradictory amnesias are found in the failure of the capacity of Evocation, by affective repression, with a true disorder in the memories. The subject is often stunned, without knowing exactly what is happening. This is the case of Garabandal. It is a psychic amnesia of unknown cause. At least I do not know it, despite the inquiries I have made in this regard. Is its cause preternatural, supernatural or natural?

On another of my trips, I was in Santander with the kind secretary of the Commission. We talked for ten hours and we went over all of what he considered to be negative with

respect to Garabandal. As a result, it was agreed to meet the Bishop's representative (the Bishop was at the Council) in order to request the formation of a new Commission of Study.

The Vicar promised us he would communicate our petition to the Bishop. Nevertheless, as far as I am concerned no response was ever received.

## XI

During one of my visits to Garabandal, I asked permission from Mari Loli and Jacinta's parents to lift the girls during the trance. They did not object. I lifted Mari Loli and Jacinta separately while they were kneeling. I lifted them holding them by their bent elbows.

I observed a marked plasticity of their muscles. I had been told that when the girls were in a trance, no one could move them or lift them, not even people of considerable strength. I have an ordinary amount of strength. Nevertheless, I lifted them a few inches off the ground with great ease.

If it were not because in those moments the power of suggestion can play tricks, I would ascertain that they weighed less in the normal state. When they were back in the normal state once again, I asked them to get into the same posture. I had the impression that it took me much more effort than when they were in a state of trance. I can state that there was a considerable weight loss during the trance.

Now I should confess that I played a small trick. Without losing my medical rigidity and lucidity, I prayed a Hail Mary with all the Christian fervor before my attempt. This was my trick.

Another day, I asked Conchita's family if I could stay with her the entire time if she had a walking ecstasy. There was no objection. That afternoon, when I told Conchita about my intention of examining her. It seemed as if the girl was a little worried.

During the course of a long trance, as Conchita was walking through the streets of the village, I heard her murmur my name clearly.

— "Is Dr. Puncernau good?"

— "Well... but that will be of little importance..."

This was part of the conversation I overheard. When she finished the ecstasy (there were many people) I asked her to tell me what the Blessed Virgin had said about me. I thought to myself, "what if she begins telling all of your sins." As if Conchita had guessed my fears, she said:

— "The Virgin never reveals the sins".

When people left her in peace, she wrote the following on the back of a holy card, which I naturally kept:

(textual copy)

***"The Virgin told me that she was very happy with you because you are giving much glory to God. What you are studying will occur and you will succeed. Conchita."***

The superlatives called my attention. "This must be a thing coming from the child herself." But, what Mother doesn't find all of the graces in her child whether or not the child was a notorious person or a shameless one?

Another detail that I want to point out is the following. Frequently, during their ecstasies, the girls took off their shoes and walked through the streets which were full of mud, stones, holes, glass, animal droppings, etc.

Although I have not personally witnessed it, I was given the assurance that they had walked barefoot over a pile of burning coals. That day, when I knew that they had had two calls, I begged Conchita to let me examine her feet. She took her old sandals off both feet and I especially observed the bottom of the feet. They were clean; there was no mud on them. Perhaps she had just washed them. I do not know. She had a long trance, and in the middle of it, she lost her sandal and continued walking with one bare foot. I observed that after a while she removed the other sandal and walked through the streets of the village. She passed through the streets over all of the mud and other debris in her bare feet. And finally, she finished the trance barefoot in her house. I immediately asked her to let me see her bare feet. I looked for a scratch, a cut, a contusion on her feet, but there was nothing. When I was tired of examining her feet, she put her sandals on once again.

I did not realize until later of one essential fact. Her feet were as clean as before she had walked through the muddy streets. I knew she had not cleaned them. I am sure, because she did not leave my sight. She had not even gotten her feet dirty.

## XII

There are many things to tell about Garabandal. The majority of the things can be found in numerous books and pamphlets which have been written about Garabandal and its protagonists.

As I said before in this short report I have separated what affects me as a medical doctor from what affects me as the Christian who loves the Virgin Mary. These are two things apart.

It is almost certain that all these facts have a Parapsychological explanation. But isn't it that Parapsychology and the PSI phenomena have been created by God and God allows them ...? And can't He, more than anyone, provoke them ...? If the Miracle is a sign appropriate to the times and circumstances ... can't the Parapsychological events have the label of Miracles?

A few days ago, I heard of Ceferino's death. May Ceferino rest in peace. He was a bit rough but extremely sincere. He was the one who told me the following:

"It was winter. There had not been any visitors in the village. There had been a blizzard, and it was very cold. Around three in the morning, I heard Mari Loli getting up and getting dressed."

— "Where are you going now...?"

— "The Virgin has called me to the frame..."

— "Are you crazy, in this cold...?"

— "The Virgin has called me to the frame..."

— "What if you encounter a wolf... do what you want... but neither your mother nor me are going to accompany you..."

"Mari Loli finished dressing, opened the door and went toward the frame, about two hundred meters away from the village. If I had been sure it was the Virgin, I would not have moved from the bed... the Virgin would have taken care of her... but since we weren't sure, my wife and I got up and walked toward the frame. We found her in the middle of the blizzard, on her knees in a trance. It was freezing. We thought she would be as cold as ice, so we rubbed her cheeks. She was very warm as though she hadn't left the sheets of her bed. We stayed there for more than an hour. We were dead from cold while she

continued talking familiarly to the vision. Obviously, the penance was meant for us, the parents...”

This is, more or less, what Ceferino told me one night when we were sitting in his tavern. I repeat that if I had to write everything I have lived in Garabandal, it would be a book the size of Dr. Zhivago.

And that's not my purpose. The majority of the events in Garabandal have been written abundantly and published in national and foreign literature as well. I only wanted to mention a series of events that were very personal and I have not mentioned until now, except to very few people in my family. I have waited fifteen years.

Naturally, thanks to God, I am a man of Faith. Faith rooted in the observation of history, among other things. Consequently, in the light of an explanation that questioned Religion, I have noticed that with a little time and patience, soon a new explanation emerged in order to put down opposite prejudices.

I recognize that I would have preferred to write these previous pages from the perspective of the Christian faithful, but that is not the paper that has been assigned to me. I have written them with all the possible coldness and above all with absolute sincerity.

Science and Religion have always run like parallel lines which sometimes cross and seem to clash. In the long or short run, all the storms are undone and a beautiful spring day begins, as always.

**END**

## TESTIMONY-REPORT OF Fr. JOSÉ RAMÓN MARÍA ANDREU, SJ

### *Part I*

Father Ramón María Andreu Rodamilans S.J., with residence in the Retreat House of Christ the King in Valladolid, states that:

With special authorization from his Excellency, Archbishop Doroteo Fernández, Apostolic Administrator of Santander, and with the blessing of my Superiors Reverend Father Conrado Pérez Picón S.J., Vice-provincial of Western Castile, and of Reverend Father Cipriano Arana S.J., Rector of the Professional Schools of Christ the King and mine: I have visited San Sebastián de Garabandal, near Cosío and the City Hall of Puentenansa, in the province of Santander, on the occasion of the events that take place there and that refer to four girls who claim to see and hear the Blessed Virgin Mary. The total amount of days I have been in San Sebastian de Garabandal, in various trips, add up to, more or less, 13 days and in which I have obtained the following information that I place at the disposal of the Ecclesiastical Authorities in order to facilitate the work that, on the occasion of such events, they shall perform.

The girls' names are: María Concepción, 12 years old; Jacinta, 12 years old; María Dolores, 12 years old; María Cruz, 11 years old

The girls are neither sisters nor cousins. The psychological age that they represented during the first month of the alleged visions would be about 8 or 9 years corresponding to girls in the city and school.

According to the parish priest and the girl's parents and teachers, the girl's behavior until the date when the events began was good. They were ordinary girls, as it will be explained later, until the trances began.

### THE CHOICE OF CHILDREN

I quote Fr. Arintero, O.P.: "Why does God prefer the little ones? ... Because the little ones, the women and the virgin souls have a purer heart or they generously do violence to their passions. The Holy Spirit can make light shine in them. The words of the sixth beatitude, "blessed are the pure in heart because they will see God", can be apply in this life.

Men and great talents, therefore, have no reason to accuse women because of this, before they have to accuse themselves. It is not a privilege for the little ones and the women to see better supernatural things, but it is a Chastisement for men and the wise ones so that they could be humble themselves. And if they do not, even greater confusion awaits them, as the Savior declared to St. Catherine of Siena.

Saint Teresa prayed to Our Lord that, instead of filling her with so many favors, he would give them to wise men, priests, religious and theologians. And he replied: "These people do not have time nor want to establish a relationship of trust with me, and since they always disdain me, I have to address simple women."

(Arintero, The Mystical Evolution, p. 737).

## **THE PEOPLE**

In the story of the apparitions at Lourdes, the following has been said: "People sincerely believed in the apparitions and indicated with certainty that the Lady was the Virgin Mary. That is why they had cleaned the grotto, placed vases with flowers and candles that burned ..."

There is an analogy between the intuition of the followers of Lourdes and those of Garabandal. The neighbors of the town of Garabandal neither affirm nor deny anything. They do not tell more than what they see, but all of them, knowing the girl's sincerity and integrity, say that it is true.

The onslaught of curious people and the spreading of news is creating - or at least transforming - certain facts into fantastic hoaxes. To act seriously, first-hand witnesses as well as authentic facts are the only reliable data for a study. I have directly verified the data that I mention in this report, except for the cases in which the source is explicitly cited.

## **ISOLATION OF THE TOWN**

San Sebastián de Garabandal is located about 7 km uphill from Cosío.

The isolation of San Sebastián de Garabandal gives the town and its inhabitants a sense of tranquility and peace that has been broken with the influx of pilgrims and curious people.

At nightfall, a woman from the village, María, Jacinta's mother, goes through the streets of the village, according to custom, ringing a bell to invite neighbors to pray for "the souls of purgatory". The rosary is prayed every day in the Church.

## **PATIENCE OF THE GIRLS' PARENTS**

The girls' parents have undergone a great test during these events. Being simple and humble people, they have suddenly found that their daughters experienced a phenomenon that is constantly exposing them to the public that comes to the town, while creating a situation that they can hardly handle.

People does not always know how to be right in their words and works. Therefore, they have sometimes created unpleasant situations that they have endured with self-denial.

The lack of authority, of order, makes the girl's parents and the men of the town have to defend the girls. Their parents want to know what all of this is about and they find themselves alone when faced with facts that they cannot understand. The fact that nothing unpleasant has ever happened after the affluence of so many cars and people could be interpreted as another sign that there is a hand that watches over the girls and takes care of them with affection.

## THE PUBLIC AND THE VISIONS

A relationship has been observed between the public that goes to Garabandal and the alleged visions. In many occasions, the appearances have not taken pace due to the fact that the public who pretended to be pious pilgrims was actually drunk or sang profane songs. Consequently, the public left the place bitterly disappointed. The first time I observed this was on August 15, the feast of the Assumption. That afternoon the whole crowd waited in vain. At the sight of those who behaved like pilgrims (but were not) and while hearing the profane songs and seeing the state of semi-drunkenness that some showed, many simple men and women of the town told me: "It seems that today there will be nothing, because this has happened before and we are glad that nothing occurs when they come like that".

Another day Amalia, Loli's sister, who was eleven years old at the time, called me to tell me in secret that Jacinta was seeing the Virgin in Loli's house. I went in and found her in a trance. Among other things (I will mention later), Jacinta said to the vision: "Why are you leaving so soon? ...

"Oh, of course, like the day of Our Lady ... they are singing".

When the ecstasy finished, I asked her. And she answered me: "She says she is leaving because they are singing and partying".

When I left the house, I asked: "Is there anyone who is singing?" And they replied: "Yes, there is a group that pretends to be pilgrims." That day there was no vision until that group, which had come on a bus, left.

This happened on several occasions. Until today, I have been able to verify five occasions. And, during these five days, the impropriety and irreverence of the public was absolutely evident.

## NORMAL GIRLS

Ordinarily and except when they were in trance, the four girls showed visible signs of normality. That has been the opinion of the doctors who have seen them, even those who have been most scrupulous in analyzing them.

For a normal observer, for his parents, for the parish priest and for all who knew them from long ago, these four girls have always been normal. The girls, after three long months, were perfectly normal: they played, they ran, they took long walks to the meadows - about five kilometers out and five back -. They behaved as ordinary girls.

The fact that a person may be sick is not an obstacle to the occurrence of mystical phenomena. Bernadette Soubirous suffered from asthma until her death. St. Gemma Galgani was very sick.

In the case of Garabandal, the girl's state of normality is even greater. Father Royo Marín says in his book "the Theology of Christian Perfection" (No. 566) that "the history of the souls admitted in these favors of Divine Grace clearly suggests that God adapts himself to the most diverse complexions and that none of them represents an insurmountable obstacle to the One who with His sole Will was able to bring all things out of nothing".

## **Part II- THE VISIONS**

The number of views cannot be counted per day. Although in the first fifteen days, there have been no vision every day, then there have been many visions in a single day.

The hours have also been very varied: First thing in the morning, mid-morning, after lunch; for a while the visions were from seven to nine o' clock in the afternoon. Then they took place at night. They ended on some occasions at five o'clock in the morning. Fr. Royo Marín says that the frequency in some saints has been great, such as St Magdalene de Pacis, St Michael de Sanctis and St Joseph of Cupertino, whose lives were nothing but a continuous series of ecstasy ... (Theology of Christian Perfection, No. 465).

### **DURATION OF THE VISIONS**

The duration of the visions has been very varied. Sometimes it has been very brief, like two to five minutes. These brief visions have been few and have always coincided with some news referring to the same visions: "Today I won't come because they sing a lot" (this was when there was a lot of fun in the town), or also: "I'll come to see you at [certain time]."

They usually last more than half an hour and can last up to two hours. I remember once in which Loli was from nine o'clock at night until five o'clock in the morning. The visions are interrupted when they are very long as the ones we mentioned regarding Loli: the two breaks came to last between two an hour and a half.

It is interesting in the history of the mystics to see the enormous variety as regards the duration of these states, from a quick touch, to 40 days without interruption in ecstasy.

Santa Teresa says: "Although it sometimes lasts a long time, it may sometimes end abruptly, as when the Lord wants to tell you something. It's not something that can be procured by any human mean".

### **TIME DO NOT GO BY**

When girls are in a state of trance, it gives the impression to them that time does not elapse. That is why it is very frequent, that after an hour or more of having a vision, they say: "Do not go!, why are you leaving so soon? You have just been here a little ... Oh! ... so long? ... I thought that it had been only a minute". Despite the positions that sometimes seemed uncomfortable to the visitors, they did not notice them, such as when they were on their knees on pointy edges and after the marches that last a long time. They always had the impression that it had been an instant.

When the ecstasies finished, they were happy with a feeling of having rested, as their physical appearance so indicated. Despite the marches and races, they did not give them a tired feeling, nor did they get hot, but rather they had the tendency to look pale and to have the sense of freshness.

## THE ANGEL

The Angel was the first person whom they had the joy of seeing. When he later revealed his identity, he turned out to be Saint Michael the Archangel. The first days he did not speak, then he identified himself and he later announced that on July 2 they would see the Blessed Virgin.

According to Fr. Royo Marín, it is frequent that the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin were preceded by an Angel. At Fátima, the Angel was the Angel of Peace, the one writers identify as Saint Michael.

## FEAR

On very few occasions they have felt afraid. Only at the beginning when they saw the light and did not see the road. They said they knew where to take a run. Afterwards they have felt great peace and joy.

Another time, they were afraid of the people, since they saw how many stars fell on the ground, towards the pines and although they did not see the people they knew that they were there.

"The visions that come from God, usually produce great fear at first, but then they leave the soul full of love, humility, softness and peace" (Fr. Royo Marín, Theology of Christian Perfection no. 591).

## PACE

The visions of the Angel began, as we have said, on June 18, 1961. As of that date they took place more and more often. From June 18 to July 2, there were some days when girls did not have any vision.

The other days, the girls saw the Angel, but he did not talk. On July 2, the girls saw the Blessed Virgin for the first time, which had been previously announced by the Angel, and she talked to the girls also for the first time.

Until the end of July the girls were still in a reverent posture and on their knees. They talked, they took the crown and the Child, and they gave kisses, they showed rosaries, etc ...

In the second half of July the oscillations and swinging movements began. Towards August 2 or 3, the first fall took place.

On August 5, the ecstatic marches began in various ways that will be later described.

Before the uproar of the curious or the pious that came to town in large numbers, his parents determined to close the doors of their houses and to keep the girls inside. The Blessed Virgin told the girls to obey and that they would continue to see her. This happened at times and the girls walked the streets again when their parents led the doors open.

## THE FALLS

As of August 3, the falls that occurred when they were in ecstasy had multiplied. Sometimes the four girls have fallen together. Other times not all together, only two or three. Other times only one. The postures in which they remained when they fell were generally sculptural and of great beauty. They have never fallen into unseemly and incorrect positions.

They could remain on the ground for a moment or several minutes. When they fell together, they fell and then got up usually synchronized, although not always.

"St Catherine of Siena's hands and feet contracted simultaneously, making it impossible to tear off the objects in her hands."

## THE STATIC WALKS

They began towards August 5 and since then the girls adopted the following forms: Sometimes, they had all been together, walking towards the front and at a normal pace.

- Other times, the four began together and they were separated during the walk, each one going through different streets, and then they found themselves at a certain point showing joy when they met.
- Frequently, they walked straight ahead and at great speed, so that even the fastest men could not follow them.
- Sometimes, not many, they walked in big leaps.
- With some frequency, they walked backwards, to the rhythm of dance, with great agility and through many streets and stones without hitting each other.
- Sometimes, they walked on his knees.
- Other times, they walked while seated.
- Sometimes, they walked following certain people who had told them something or given them something, or prayed something, or had just laughed. This will be detailed later.

Among themselves, in spite of being in a trance, the girls saw each other perfectly. The ones who they could not see were the rest of the people who surrounded them.

Fr. Royo Marín says: "However, during their ecstasies, some saints talked about the object of their contemplative vision and even went on an ecstatic walk. The cases of St. Catherine of Siena and St Magdalene de Pacis are famous "(Theology of Christian Perfection no. 467).

## THE POSTURES

The postures in which the girls remained in their trances, whether on their knees or not, and when they were moving forward or backward, and when they fell, were always very correct.

On August 31, one of the girls went seated several meters on the way to the church and several meters back

The audience that witnessed it was so excited that many cried, but not because they were moving sitting on the floor, but, because the dresses covered the girls up to their knees all the way, without nobody touching or fixed them up. It was later found that the dresses were not stained at all. This was repeated many times. That day when Loli went into a trance, the Blessed Virgin advised her to lengthen her skirt a bit.

Fr. Arintero says in his book entitled "Mystical Evolution" (p. 529): "In natural ecstasies, the convulsive movements that are usually present, are disorderly and unseemly and expose to great risks; while in the divine ecstasies there is admirable modesty and composure and there is no danger of harm, even if the seer falls on fire". In fact, the only times that the girls fell hurting themselves was when they ran out of trance.

In three months, it was not known that they had any significant damage while in trance.

## **TWO VIEW POINTS**

There are two point of views that can be distinguished, that of the spectator and that of the girls in ecstasy. The spectators saw the girls and their way of acting in terms of external phenomena: movements, laughter, words, etc., but they did not see the vision.

On the other hand, he girls did see the vision, the light, they also heard, etc., but they did not see the people, although they knew because the vision often told them so. The Girls who were in ecstasy could see each other, but when one left and not the others, those who stayed stopped seeing the one that had already left. And when this girl came back, the rest saw her again. This is what happened on July 29:

While Jacinta was in ecstasy in the pines, with a large audience around, I was thinking about what response could be given to that phenomenon.

(This report was made at the beginning of the apparitions and after being written, the apparitions followed several years until they publicly ended in 1966).

I thought of hypnosis, hysteria, suggestion, impressionability ... when suddenly, out of the two girls who were in ecstasy, one of them, Loli, returned to normal instantaneously. When she returned to normal, she looked at me and said: "She left." And this dialogue took place:

- Father Andréu: Don't you see the Virgin anymore?

- Loli: No, sir.

- F.A.: Why?

- L.: She left.

- F.A.: Look at her (Jacinta, who was still ecstatic. Loli looked and smiled at the sight of her friend).

- F.A.: What did the Virgin tell you? (When she was going to answer he fell back in ecstasy)

- L.: (In ecstasy) Why did you leave?

- L.: (To the Virgin) Why did you retire? (Loli and Jacinta at the same time in ecstasy and talking to the vision). So that's why?

- L.: So it's for them to believe? (I do not remember if she said for them to believe or for me to believe)

It is clear that the Virgin Mary wanted to give proof that it was She who was there and that everything present was far from hysteria, suggestion, hypnosis, etc., but ecstasy.

## **INTERMEDIATE ZONE**

Since the first days of September, the following was observed: the girls who were having a vision established contact with the others who were not. Thus, for example, if Jacinta enters into a trance, she may come into contact with Mari Cruz, Loli and Conchita, who are with her but do not see the vision and therefore are in a normal state.

The contact is established through questions, which can sometimes be done mentally or orally. In addition to the questions and the answers there is another element: body flexibility.

In some moments, the girl who is in ecstasy is usually rigid, as if in paralysis, for example in the falls. Then, it is useless to try to move or change the postures of the hands, arms etc ... The effect is as if they were statues.

Then, it is when one of the other girls, in a normal state, can change the posture of the visionary that presents a great rigidity for others while a great flexibility for the girls themselves.

## **ANESTHESIA**

Anesthesia in regard to the pain when in ecstasy is complete. Apart from the tests that have been done to the four visionaries, such as pricking them, burning them with cigarettes, etc., I have seen them falling abruptly on their knees without causing the slightest gesture of pain.

The most impressive thing for me in this sense was when I saw Loli take a big blow to the head (being in ecstasy) on the ridge of a concrete step. The noise was huge. Those present drowned out a scream of shock, but the girl in ecstasy, sitting on the floor, smiled, as she continued talking to the vision. (When they left the ecstasy, we asked her if he had felt pain. She did not remember any blow. She said that maybe it would be once she felt like a cramp all over her body, but she did not feel any pain. In the place of the blow he had a small bump).

"When ecstasy is total and perfect, insensitivity is absolute. The most painful incisions, the most abrupt jerks, the burns, etc., are useless to bring them back from the ecstasy before they stop seeing the vision. Often, (as it happened in Garabandal) the eyes retain their activity, but it is to have them fixed in the divine vision, with a vivacity that seems to

enlarge them considerably. They perceive absolutely nothing regarding material things, as it can be seen by brusquely passing in front of their open eyes a powerful light or any object, without producing the slightest movement in their pupils or eyelids" (Fr. Royo Marín, Theology of Christian Perfection no. 467).

## **REFLEXES**

Many reflexes disappear while others are suppressed. Thus, the eyes seem dead, without seeing. But as the ecstasies multiply, they seem to acquire a slight reflection in the pupils.

The girls sometimes cried with quiet tears that fall down their cheeks. These tears corresponded to moments that were ecstatic and seemed to be a consequence of what they saw or what they heard, since the words they said were something like: "Sorry", "mercy", "we won't do that again", "we'll tell them".

On one occasion they returned to normal with tears in their eyes. The girls said that the Virgin had told them that the people had behaved with little respect in the Church.

The same thing happened again on the street and the girls said that Father Luis had told them that there was little order and that they were throwing themselves on top of each other. The girls asked the parish priest and his brother to try to bring order by placing the men of the town in large circles. And the girls also said that owing to lack of order the vision left very soon.

## **PARTICIPATION OF THE SPECTATORS**

The following has been observed: at the beginning, the spectators were absent from the girl's field of vision. The girls felt they were alone with the vision. It is true that, sometimes, they spoke to the vision of some of their acquaintances or priests or relatives and also that they gave the Virgin stones to kiss, to give these to the people later.

Later, a greater participation was observed. The girls did not only talk about known spectators but sometimes located and touched them. They, according to their explanation, did not see the people around them but felt them with the touch. To locate the people who had given them objects for the Virgin, after Our Lady had kissed them, they did so in two ways: they usually pointed in several directions until the vision told them where the person was or it was the vision who took a girl's hand and led her to the place where the person she was looking for was.

They did this when they wanted to return medals or rosaries. Sometimes they put these by the neck or in the pocket. You could hear them ask: "Where is the pocket"? Oh, I understand ... inside?

Once, one of the girls got me a few medals in the cassock pocket after releasing a button. When they put the rosaries or chains around the head, once the Virgin had kissed them, they said: "Take my hands because I don't see them". Then, the movement was much faster and so accurate that they put the rosary or the chain without touching the head at all.

There were other ecstasies with collective participation. The Virgin told one of the visionaries to recite the Rosary in the Church at the end of the vision. As the Church was closed the girl went to start at the door; right there she went into ecstasy. The Virgin told her to pray it loudly so that the audience gathered there could answer. Thus, in ecstasy, she prayed the Rosary through the streets of the town, with a strong voice, while the audience replied. She never counted and never made a mistake regarding the numbers of Hail Marys, because, as the girls had said on other occasions: "The Virgin announces when the Glory comes".

## **INDEPENDENCE**

The way of entering and leaving the trance states has sometimes been a joint and simultaneous action among all the girls. Other times it has been alternated. Several cases have been given:

- The four girls entered and left at the same time.
- One entered before another.
- While several stayed in ecstasy, one of them returned to reality for a while and then went into a trance again.
- While one entered, another left.
- As the girls are four, there have been many different combinations.
- While the number of ecstasies increased in one girl, in others it diminished, passing several days without "the Virgin calling me".

Despite acting independently on many occasions, the agreement in what they saw was unanimous.

## **SPECTACULAR NATURE**

From this point of view, the following can be taken into account:

- The girls, in their normal life, did not look forward to showiness. On the contrary, they wanted to run away from the people who came to see them. One day, the girls were coming from the meadow and while arriving at a stop from where the town could be seen, Loli and Jacinta said: "What a pity, how well we were alone and now people came again". The girls said that the Virgin had told them to be in their homes, without leaving them, only to go to another house, that is, not to walk the streets during the afternoon when people came. The Virgin did not tell them that every day. The girls fully complied.
- On the other hand, the girls wanted people to come to believe, but ignored them when they came.
- The fact that most of their ecstasies took place in the street and therefore, in public, did not depend on them since they were brought by the vision and once all finished, the girls retired to their homes. Usually, the vision left everyone at home and they woke them up at the door while the others did not wake up until they reached their homes.
- Even in what it refers to the vision, the girls obeyed to stay at home according to the order they received from their parents or priests.

- They did not worry at all, if after many people had come and there was no vision at all. They did not worry that visitors had to leave disappointed.

## **AGREEMENT REGARDING EXPLANATIONS**

Many were the occasions when attempts have been made to make the girls contradict themselves by asking them leading questions to assess the answers they gave: the following should be taken into account:

- When the girls talked in their normal state, they could do so with all the deficiencies proper of girls of their age, environment etc. ... Thus, they may have had memory failures, lack of expression, fatigue and even lying.

- Not all girls had always the same visions; therefore, some had information that others did not.

Regarding the descriptions of what they saw, the four girls always agreed. They also agreed on what they heard when the four of them were listening.

There were some small oscillations in regard to the day when certain events had happened, and they preferred to say that they did not remember exactly how something happened.

Regarding a miracle or trial, the girls said that the Virgin had told them that she would do it. "When the speech is made immediately to the intelligence, it is not subject to error; but when it is done to the imagination or to the senses, certain illusions can sometimes occur" (Lalbermant, Doctr., p. 7.c. 4, to 5).

"One should not reject, without further ado, a revelation because some of its parts or some detail is obviously false. The rest may be true" (Theology of Christian Perfection, No. 608).

At Fatima, the story is as follows: "Children were bothered by these kinds of questions." They were still somewhat stunned by what they had seen; It was not easy to take up their thoughts to everyday matters. Some answers were brief and correct. In general, they said: "It's a secret. I can't talk about it" (Thomas Wash).

Like the visionaries of Fátima, the girls of Garabandal said and reacted in the same way.

Speaking once with the girls, I asked them if they remembered what they saw in the visions and they answered me this way: "We remember what the Virgin tells us, but little about what we say". This was the response of the four girls.

I have observed, in addition to the above, the safety of the girls, their peace and joy, as well as their obedience, even against the vision; if their parents told them otherwise, the most important thing - according to what the Virgin had told them - was obedience.

The visionaries of Garabandal were girls from a remote village where it seemed that civilization had not arrived yet. There was no telephone, no access road, only a goat path, the electric light that had arrived was much worse than what a candle could provide. Some of them had never seen a railway and spoke a very imperfect Spanish.

How is it possible that when they were in ecstasy or talked about something related to the appearance, or for example in some ecstasy they spoke in Greek, Latin, German, they did so with a perfection not common in them due to what was explained above. The only possible explanation is that they were illuminated by something supernatural, if not, it is not possible to happen.

## **POSITIVE DESCRIPTIONS**

The descriptions abound a lot among the girls when describing the things they saw. Generally, what was difficult for them was to say what they felt... It was easier to say what they saw. I will write about some of their descriptions:

### **- THE VIRGIN**

She is rather tall, wears a crown of bright stars, which is round but open (like a diadem). The white dress with white flowers, the blue bluish mantle. She does not wear a veil. Her hair is long. Sometimes, she opens the mantle a little to show them the dress, when the girls ask for it. The hair sometimes moves a bit in the breeze. The Virgin is 18 years old. Her feet cannot be seen. Her hair is brown, almost black. Both her eyes and eyebrows are black. She is gorgeous, and she almost always smiles.

### **- THE CHILD**

She sometimes brings the Child and she sometimes does not. When the Blessed Virgen brings the Child, she brings him in her arms and she sometimes lets the girls carry him. The child is small. He does not talk but laughs. His feet cannot be seen. He also has a round, plain but open crown.

### **-THE ANGEL**

The angel is St. Michael. He is the first one that appeared to the girls. His wings are pink. His feet cannot be seen. He does not have a sword and he is 9 years old.

### **-THE LIGHT**

Light accompanies all visions. It is like sunlight, but it is a different kind of light. At night the girls also see the light. This light prevents them from seeing other things, except the people in the visions and the other girls who are also participating in the vision. When a girl stops seeing the vision and returns to normal, those that continue in ecstasy stop seeing her.

### **-OTHER ANGELS**

On at least one occasion, the girls saw the Virgin surrounded by other small angels; the number was five. On that occasion the Virgin told them that she was the Queen of the angels, that was why the angels accompanied her. This is similar to a vision Saint Teresa as she also saw small angels.

### **-THE VOICE**

They sometimes only have a speech. They do not see the person talking, but they do hear it. In these cases, they also see a light like sunlight, which is, apparently, what makes them

focused and abstracts them from reality. The Virgin told them that they would hear a voice and they had to follow it. The voice they heard most often was that of Fr. Luis Andréu.

They did not see him, but they heard him, and they felt his hand when he helped them get up or he took them to indicate where a certain person was. The light is like sunlight but faded and rays come down. The voice leaves the ray zone. The ecstatic walks took place because the girls saw that the light and the voice or the virgin went away, and they just followed. They did not know if they were running, walking, lying down; not even if they moved or not. It was a very inaccurate feeling.

## NEGATIVE DESCRIPTIONS

To explain some of the phenomena that taking place in Garabandal, the girls resorted to negative explanations.

Thus, when they wanted to describe what the voice of the Virgin was like, they expressed themselves on an occasion like this: "There is no voice like Hers".

When speaking of the calls, they said: "It was as if the Virgin told us: come or run". They felt them inside and without words.

The feeling they had in ecstatic walks was as if they were resting, or asleep, but they remembered what the visions said. At the end of a negative explanation the girls usually added: "well, well" or "I don't know".

The impression was that they did not succeed, in those cases, to describe something real that they had felt. And in these negative descriptions, as well as in the positive ones, the four girls agreed.

"But you cannot say what it feels like, when the Lord gives you to understand secrets and His greatness; the delight is over what it could be understood, that rightly makes you hate the delights of this life, which are garbage all together..."(Life 27, 12).

"The mystics do not succeed in expressing clearly what happens to them". "There is no language to talk about these things", Saint Teresa would say. When this saint began to describe the infused contemplation in the Fourth Mansion, she writes it as follows: "They begin to be supernatural and it is very difficult describe them in order to be understood, if your Majesty does not do it". "Only by force of metaphors, examples and comparisons, that are not satisfying, as well as other devices which may tell something of what happens to those who have never experienced it. The reason is always the same. The supernatural action of the grace transcends the discursive mode of human reason. The intuitive is perceived but cannot be properly expressed on the basis of human discourses and reasoning" (Theology of Christian Perfection, No. 426).

Regarding the phrase of the girls used to explain how they talked in their marches and ecstasies, they told me that "We were going in the air, as if lying down, I don't know, as in another world. It was like day and sun". Reading St. Teresa, I find the following phrase strikingly similar to that of the girls': "It is as if we were in another region, different

from the one in which we live, where another light so different from the one of our world is shown... (The Mansions VI-ch.V)

### **"AS IF SHE VANISHED"**

The entry into a trance is instantaneous in these girls, although it was usually preceded by three calls, the change from real life to the trance lasted a fraction of a second. The girls raised their heads suddenly and remained as if they were nailed to a vision, which was the one that took them from one place to another.

The way to end this state of trance was, generally, either by crossing themselves or by kissing. But the impression, as they explained it, was like this: "The Virgin leaves as if she vanished".

The way the Virgin left in Fatima: "... they reported having seen a Lady made of light six times in 1917. She was standing on a small tree, she talked to them and then she disappeared".

### **THE WITNESS GIRLS**

At the beginning, during the first month and a half, starting on June 18, a fact presenting characteristics of great originality took place three or four times.

When leaving a trance, the girls said: "The Virgin has said that Sari and Mari Carmen come with us. The others should be far away so that they do not hear what we say".

Then the "visionaries" in trance went to the two "witnesses" and the formers entered in trance before the two "witnesses" in the pines.

The witness girls were 6 years old. On one occasion they wanted to change them for a bigger one, about 12 years old and the Virgin said no. Let the ones that she had said come. The "witness" girls could be asked what the "visionary" girls said and these repeated some words they had heard, but could not reach the full meaning of the conversation. This corresponded to the days when the Virgin manifested the secret to the girls.

The interpretation seems to be that Fr. Valentín could have a remote control of what happened in the trance, but without getting to know what the girls were actually talking about. It was known that the conversation was good, apparently, but without getting more than generalities, "A girl witness told us: They say you should not to tell them bad things - When we asked what "bad things" meant, they said: do not make them cry; Sad things.

The little ones of 6 years old did not understand much and sometimes they got bored and came to us to say: "they are crying".

### **Part III- THEME OF THE VISIONS**

#### **CONVERSATIONS OR DIALOGUES**

We have long fragments of some dialogues. In general, they are simple full of children's expressions and have the appearance of a tour of the events of the day or of the previous days. Like what happened to Bernadette Soubirou, some of those who hear them take them for a joke.

It is convenient to remember that in the first and most extensive books written about Lourdes, it is said that Bernadette told the apparition the incidents of the day and that, until she knew who the apparition was, she answered: "Yes, Miss".

Throughout these dialogues you can see the extremely simple and transparent soul of the girls. Expressions like this are sometimes heard: "Take me, even if it is to go and then come back".

Other times there are allusions to sacrifices, sins, those who do not believe; They often ask for cures and miracles for people to believe.

The normal thing is that they are simple topics and that they correspond to experiences of the day.

### **THE SONG OF SAINT MICHAEL**

The girls frequently sang the song of St Michael:

Saint Michael Archangel  
great warrior  
who in fierce fight  
to Luzbel beat... etc

Who like God  
nobody like God.

The girls said that the Virgin wanted a shrine to St Michael in the pines. We heard him say that in a trance and also in normal conversation.

The angel is the first to appear.

### **MEDALS AND ROSARIES**

It was common to see girls with rosaries, medals and Christs hung around their necks. These were the ones the public had given them so that the Virgin would kiss them.

From the beginning, the trend towards blessed religious objects was considerable, as well as rosaries, medals and crucifixes.

On the occasion of giving these objects to the Virgin, several cases of hierognosis were observed.

In addition, other cases took place, although most cannot be verified, such as favors and cures made, either at the time when girls gave religious objects to be kissed, or have favors and cures obtained by kissing or praying with the rosaries previously kissed by the Virgin.

## THE KISSES

During the visions, girls were seen kissing something. From their gestures and their subsequent explanations, the girls kissed the Virgin, the archangel Saint Michael and the Child. And the girls were also kissed by them. The Child was sometimes taken in their arms.

The gesture of kissing, being kissed, taking the Child or the crowns were completely defined.

I have not seen, in all the numerous trances I have witnessed, a simultaneous action of kissing two children or three at once, but successively.

I have only seen it done simultaneously when the kiss was not given, but thrown from a distance or when the kiss was directed to different people, for example, the Virgin and the Child or the Angel.

It was common that at the end of a vision, the girls or a girl received a kiss or two in the face and that they or she gave one.

## THE CROWN

It was frequent, especially from the middle of the first month, that in their trances the girls received the crown of the Virgin and that of the Child. She lent it and they put it on some brief moments. The Virgin's crown was big for them while that of the Child was rather small.

The description of the crown given by the girls and that agreed with the way of wearing it, by the gestures they made was like this: "Round but open".

By explaining how it was, it seems to be a diadem, according to what they have been able to reconstruct. All the girls described it as "round, bright, with stars and open".

The Child's crown was small, plain, round and open. It also gave the impression of being a kind of diadem. The four girls saw it the same way.

## THE STONES

The stones have also been frequent theme of the girls' visions of girls.

These were small stones, about the size of a large candy. They picked them up from the ground, in a trance state, or had them prepared in advance. They gave them to the Virgin to be kissed and then to someone as a souvenir, or as a sign of forgiveness. It had often been seen that the same vision asked them to look for more stones, but they did not find them.

It is convenient to remember here, among the things that at first sight seem strange, how the Virgin commanded Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes to take grass and to take it to her mouth and chew it.

Concerning the stones that the girls of Garabandal gave to be kissed by the Virgin, we have been able to observe several cases of Hierognosis that will be later described.

## **THEMES OF THE DAY**

In the same way as what happened in Lourdes and Fatima, the girls of Garabandal talked in their visions about the incidents that had taken place during the day, especially the topics that had impressed them most and especially the priests and religious people who had come.

This part of the dialogues is the most disappointing one due to the simple aspects that it sometimes depicted. Related to this topic, an anonymous quotation cited by Sauvé should be considered. This reads as follows: "... they say sublime things and things we cannot understand; therefore, they are sometimes admired, and others despised or object of scandal".

In the case of Bernadette Soubirous, this part of the dialogues with the Virgin was what provoked laughter and ridicule in those who listened to her. In fact, it seems to mean a kind of manifestation of her soul and conscience, with a language as simple and elementary as the one they use in their everyday life conversations. The phrases and the words keep all the incorrectness of their town style. They sometimes make a ridiculous or a charming effect.

All the topics are introduced in the form of dialogue, of which only the part of the girls is heard, but it is clearly noted that it is not them, usually, the ones who direct the conversation, but that someone is leading the dialogues.

The girls sometimes answer and sometimes ask.

Ordinarily, all the topics are or appear to have been known to them previously, except in cases where, referring to specific persons, they say that they are out, or that they left the town, or that they are sleeping or saying the mass. The vision corrects them and says no and shows them the place where they are ordinarily listening to them or near the girls themselves.

## **THE MIRACLE**

Since Fr. Valentín (the parish priest) told the girls to ask the Virgin for a miracle, in order to have evidence to believe, the girls have been heard several times to ask the Blessed Virgin for one.

At first the Virgin smiled. And she smiled again when they asked for a test or miracles for people to believe. When the girls told the Virgin that many did not believe, the Virgin smiled and answered "They'll believe"; the Virgin repeated this many times.

The girls informed that the Virgin told them that there would be a miracle but they did not know anything else.

## THE PRAYER

Rare was the vision in which the girls did not pray the Rosary or the station to the Blessed Sacrament. They prayed the rosary by singing a decade or more. The girls never counted the Hail Marys and they never made mistakes. They say that the Virgin warned them when the "Glory" should be prayed.

Apparently, the Virgin prayed with them the part that corresponded to her, sometimes the Hail Mary and sometimes the Holy Mary. If a girl ever got stuck, they said that the Virgin moved her head a little, as if correcting, but she did it smiling.

The formula they normally used was the one my brother Luis M<sup>a</sup> and I taught them: "Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women..." The station to the Blessed Sacrament is prayed with the "Viva Jesús Sacramentado".

They also made themselves the sign of the Cross many times whenever they came to the Church. Sometimes they did it wrong and the vision corrected them until they did it right. On one occasion the vision corrected the way to put the fingers in the shape of a cross to kiss them when they finished crossing themselves. It is common that they did this when finishing the vision.

The theme of praying with the Virgin presents analogies with Lourdes and Fatima, while at the same time it seems to highlight the devotion to the Rosary and the Blessed Sacrament.

## THE VERSES

On different occasions, the girls in a trance state, had made up verses. They were accompanied by music, that is, they recited the verses by singing. To date, the verses corresponded to the rounds made by the girls who were in a trance to the houses of the girls that, because they had not been called by the Virgin, were asleep.

Some of the verses corresponded to songs like "Silent Night". Others were unpublished and only made sense at the time they were sang. I remember only three of those couplets although they were more the ones sang as they could not be written when said; besides, not all of them could be heard well.

The night on which the feast of the Assumption began, the youngest of all, Mari Cruz, fell asleep at home. The other three sang at the same time, without previous agreement, among others, the following two stanzas:

Stand up Mari Cruz,  
don't you smell the lilies?  
the Virgin brings you  
to be good.

Get up Mari Cruz  
the good Virgin comes  
with a basket of flowers  
for the little girl.

Another night, Lolita was singing three stanzas alone, but I could only remember that of Conchita:

Get up girl Conchita  
that the Virgin is here  
with a little bouquet of flowers  
to give it to you

Note: Take notice of the perfection in the emphasis and the beats. According to this regard the Theology of Christian Perfection No. 6, and in general throughout the chapter, the following is stated:

I reproduce some sentences from the book: "Infused skill for the exercise of the Arts, many examples can be given: for poetry, Saint Francis of Assisi, Thomas of Celano, Jacob of Todi .... ". We are going to group a series of mystical phenomena that without being properly visions, locutions or revelations, also refer, in some way, to knowledge. There are certain special aptitudes that souls receive, in a supernatural or infused manner in order to exercise the sciences or the arts ... " This can happen in a trance state and outside of this state. Here it has only been given in a trance state.

## GENRE OF LANGUAGES

A fact that I witnessed had led to the statement that girls have spoken foreign languages in their trance state. The truth is not exactly like that, at least, until the moment of writing this chapter.

The girls spoken words belonging to different languages. The ones I heard are the following: "Ah, good, teach me French ...! What do you say? Yes, ouí, ouí ... How is it? Comantalevu? ... tre bien e vu? ... Merci .... what or why is it? Ah, qua ... it is as ducks qua, qua. How is it in Latin? ... I know Latin: Kirie elison, Christe eleison ... what? Isn't it Latin? Ah, Christe audinos ..... Domine labia mea aperies ... yes, yes. Now I don't understand.... Oh, of course, yes it's German, Gutennaj? ... So Kesen ..... and that what is it? ... Merci? ... it's very difficult, I don't understand ... How? Bigectesinen?

Although the girls said some other words, I could not get them. On another occasion, another of the girls said: "Jaire Maria Kejaritomene". This is the beginning of the Hail Mary in Greek, as well as some of the previous words, possibly all, have been heard or they could have heard among the audience that went to Garabandal.

The most interesting thing is not so much what they said, but that they corrected when they said it badly, until they got a fairly correct diction and pronunciation.

The feeling was that they were hearing the words one after the other and that they repeated them. It was very common that when they were in a trance state they heard the

girls say this sentence: "Don't go, huh?". Thus, they expressed their desire to continue in a state of trance, although sometimes they have also been heard to say: "Well, when you want, then leave." (Talking to Fr. Luis María Andreu, who according to them he is in heaven).

Other times, in a trance state, they returned to reality for a minute or several minutes and then they entered into ecstasy in a fraction of a second.

The words of Saint Teresa are interesting, such as the expression "do not go" and of this entering and leaving abruptly into ecstasy. "Neither dare to feel cheerful as from the hands it seems that good shall leave, nor to be joyful. The poor soul does not understand that, because she herself could not do anything to bring that good, that less can stop it more than the Lord wants" (Life, 15-1).

It is interesting to read the whole number (42, or 421) of Theology of Christian Perfection by Father Royo Marín O.P., of which here I quote only a few sentences: "Nobody gets to contemplate when he or she pleases".

This has been observed many times, actually always, in the girls of Garabandal, who had to be waiting, unable to anticipate events despite their great desires, except for two occasions when they received a formal order to do so, once from the parish priest and another from me.

"Sometimes it is received unexpectedly (without any prior preparation) and sometimes it is not received no matter how much the soul prepares for it."

I have seen the girls, once they had received the third call, go into ecstasy, leave it, re-enter it, etc ... without prior notice. Or being in a trance holding in their hands the objects they had, such as a flashlight, a glass, the dress or the hand of another girl, leaving a phrase unsaid, etc.

Other times they have been waiting, isolated from everyone, and the wait has been in vain. It is clear that it was not up to them to enter or leave the trance state.

"But other times it appears and disappears abruptly without the soul having done anything to provoke it or push it away".

"Nothing is more suitable to inspire feelings of humility. Because the soul clearly sees that she plays a very secondary role".

It is very common to hear answers full of humility, when asked about this: "I don't know when." "Where She says". When asked: "Do you always go to see the Virgin?", They say: "We don't know, or I don't know". "Will you see Her tomorrow?". "I don't know, or we don't know".

When they say they're going to see the Blessed Virgin, it's because She told that, or they've had a call, or because She said goodbye until tomorrow.

## THE VIRGIN'S PEDAGOGY

Since the beginning visions until August 25, there are several pieces of advice and recommendations that girls have received. The order in which they are put does not correspond exactly to the chronological one, since it is not possible for me to reconstruct it and many of them are frequently repeated.

1. At the beginning, the girls (who used to run) escaped from the audience that went up to see them; they said that the Virgin told them not to flee, but if they asked them something that they could answer, they were allowed to tell them. Since then they have not fled.

2- Another piece of advice is "that we be modest". They interpreted it to me as such: they should not be vain, dress simply and be humble.

3- The girls say that the Virgin repeats a lot the advice that they be obedient.

4- She has recommended they should make sacrifices. They did not know the meaning of the word. They asked the priests. I had to give them an explanation.

5- She instills them with horror of sin. Conchita, being ecstatic, was heard to say: "Those are sins, take it away from me, I don't want to see it", she said to the Virgin and wept. In another ecstasy Mari Loli spent a lot of time, like twenty-five minutes without saying anything, in an ecstatic attitude. In the end they saw tears running down her face as she exclaimed: "Mercy, mercy." Then, they revealed that the Virgin had told them that sin was what offended Our Lord the most.

6- Piety. She invites them to pray a lot, especially the Rosary and the station to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Every day, besides the Rosary they pray with the people, they pray others with the vision.

7- You often hear them asking in a trance state, things like: "Is it sin to sing the song "Hope"? To say that I do not want to eat, is it a sin? Etc. They also ask: Is it a sin if women smoke?"

8- When a lady wanted to take a photo with one of the girls, she left and said: "The Virgin does not want me to portray myself with those who wear a lot of cleavage."

9- The simple and confident treatment that girls have with the Virgin is striking.

10- She teaches them religious songs.

11- She correct them when they cross themselves badly, when they make mistakes in the new formula of the Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE SECRET

One of the things that has excited the curiosity of the public the most is the "secret". The girls affirm the following:

- 1- They know a secret that they will make public on October 18, 1961. It is a secret of the Virgin.
- 2- To date they have not told anyone about it in their entirety, although just partially.
- 3- They have another secret, smaller in extension, which is that of the archangel Saint Michael. That secret will be told, if they want, as from October 18.
- 4- They have the obligation to tell the secret of the Virgin but not that of Saint Michael's.
- 5- It seems that girls have three more secrets that should be made public each year.
- 6- It seems that they do not know these secrets, but the Virgin will timely manifest them.
- 7- The secret is supposed to be a message although the girls have only talked about a secret.

## EXTERNAL ASPECTS OF THE DIALOGUES

From July 2, the day on which the vision first spoke, the dialogues took place in the following positions: kneeling, swinging, walking, falling to the floor, the four being together, only three, only two or only one.

When several girls are in a trance together they participate in the same dialogue. They respond simultaneously with a "yes" or "no" or "why" or make an exclamation of joy, fear, etc ... It is seen that they correspond to something they hear at the same time.

Their voices have several tones. Sometimes, they can hardly be heard, sometimes they are normally heard. The way of talking is in accordance with the words they use in their ordinary conversation, with rare exceptions. In cases of hearing a word that they do not know, they usually ask the vision for an explanation. She either gives them the explanation or, as for the word "sacrifices", the Virgin tells them to ask the priests.

It is very common to hear them say to the vision:

- "Don't go away! You've just been here a minute." And then, as a practical expression of their desire, they tell the vision about the incidents of the day, or of the previous days, with the aim of keeping the vision with their infant narrations. But they have never shown anger because it was over soon.

On one occasion one of the girls said, in a trance state, to another: "Tell her jokes so that she won't go away".

## **Part IV- THE GIRLS' SPIRITUAL PROGRESS**

### **GRATIS DATA AND GRATUM FACIENS**

It is not easy to measure the spiritual progress of a soul, unless the person has a spiritual director with whom there exist a constant relationship. The girl's spiritual progress had to be measured more internally than externally. That is why it shall be made evident through the exercise of virtues.

St. Thomas says: "Grace is double; one by which man unites with God is called grace *gratum faciens*; another by which man cooperates with other so that the latter would turn to God, and this is called *gracia gratis data*, because it is over the power of nature, and is granted to man over the merit of the person. But He does not give it to him, so that he himself could be justified, but rather so that he could cooperate in the justification of another, that is why it is called *gratum faciens*". And regarding this, the Apostle says (1 Cor. 12-27): "Each one is granted the manifestation of the Spirit for common use, that is, for the benefit of others." (I-II, 111, 1).

"That the instrumental cause that God makes use of to produce such miraculous events - man - does not need to be supernaturally linked with Him by charity, much less be a saint."

"That these *gracias gratis datas*, do not sanctify the recipient, who can receive them in mortal sin, and remain in it after receiving them (Theology of Christian Perfection, No. 552).

And on the contrary, Suarez states that "although *gracias gratis datas* are given for the benefit of others, the one who receives them can and should try to use these for his own interest and spiritual benefit" (De gratia, prolog. 3 ch. n "7).

In the first contemplative prayers, the transformation is not so deep in order to make all kinds of defects, even voluntary ones disappear from the soul. And so the spiritual director would be greatly mistaken if he judged illusory the contemplation of a soul which is still subject to certain defects, which many times come from the temper and character rather than one's own will. Contemplation helps most efficiently the sanctification of a soul, but it does not create instantaneously and necessarily a saint (Theology of Christian Perfection, d 43 l).

### **FORGIVENESS**

In many occasions, the girls said in a trance that they forgave people, especially a priest who had forced them say the secret, by making them put a pen for each letter, on a piece of paper, next to the High Altar. They also said in a normal state that the Virgin had told them to forgive. They also forgave some doctors or other people who picked them, burned them with cigarettes, made more or less painful tests or tried to get them out of Garabandal.

### **HUMILITY**

Since the events of Garabandal began, girls are humble. They showed that in the way they dressed, they talked, in the little attention they pay to the public that comes to see them, and in the humble jobs they performed and continued to do in front of the whole world, in their obedience to the priests although they were unknown.

On several occasions the Virgin has indicated that, when they went to see her, that they did not wear bracelets or earrings. Conchita was the only one who was wearing earrings and in a trance in front of the Church asked the Virgin "What's wrong with me? Oh, okay." Returning to reality, she ran home and took off her earrings and a bracelet. She ran back and as soon as she reached the church she was again in a trance.

I have observed several times that when the girls felt the third call, they handed over or threw away a ring or bracelet that they had in their hands, and that it was not them but some lady who had left it for the girls to touch.

### **LIFE OF PIETY**

Since the events began, the girls received communion every day. They heard all the Masses that were celebrated and prayed several rosaries every day.

It sometimes called the visitors' attention that fact that the girls smiled as they talked in the Church. It sometimes called the visitors' attention that fact that the girls smiled as they talked in the Church. When I told them that it was disrespectful, they answered me: "And why do the priests talk?" I answered that the things that priests talk about in the Church were important. It must be taken into account that some days more than a dozen priests had gathered. They told me: "We ask questions about the Mass and the Rosary and sometimes others make us laugh". "But you mustn't talk, I told them". And they answered me: "Well, when we're with the Virgin, we also talk. But if you tell us to behave better, we'll do it".

On August 8, Mari Cruz said to the Virgin in a vision: "Now, I do know how to pray better, before I just knew how to play better". When the girls asked the Virgin what she wanted from the Spaniards to make amends, she replied: "to confess and to receive Communion." They practiced that. This question was suggested to them by a canon of Tarragona.

### **CHARITY**

Apart from their detachment and generosity, the girls gave away their things, sweets etc..., even if they ran out of them. They showed charity in their way to serve others, such as giving water and the things they were frequently asked. Remarkable was the attention Lolita gave to her grandmother, and Conchita and Mari Cruz to a blind man. The patient treatment with the curious, even if they bothered them was also outstanding. They wish that people would believe and be saved.

"At the beginning, the girls say, when we saw people, we would run, but the Virgin told us to be kind and to answer what we could and not to answer what was a secret."

### **SACRIFICES**

Since they have learned the meaning of the word "sacrifice" they have been practicing it. For the girls, sacrifice was, do what they do not like and stop doing what they like. For them it was a sacrifice to help others, to obey, to get rid of gifts, not to wear bracelets and other trinkets they are given, etc.

They did not know what the word "sacrifice" meant, and they had to ask.

## **CLEANSING THE SOUL**

The girls have often asked me about specific things like songs, answers they give, words they say, etc... They asked if this or that was a sin or not. Their conscience was not well formed yet and thus they did not differentiate what could be mortal, venial sin or not a sin. Nevertheless, their desire to know more was quite evident. They asked the Virgin if certain things were sin or not.

## **SIN**

Their horror to sin translated into a desire to repair for the sins of men. However, the sins of men in them did not have the correct meaning, the girls only knew that sin was something that saddens God and the Virgin.

Their way of being, of reacting, etc ... is in a childish way, because although the girls were 12 years old, their psychology corresponded to that between 8 and 9 years of city girls. Garabandal had no road, there were no trains or cars passing by and except from the crowds that came at that time due to the apparitions, people rarely visited the town.

In one of the dialogues that I have witnessed, perhaps the most dramatic one I have ever heard while the girls were talking to the Virgin: one of the girls saw something that made her say with anguish: "What is that tape? Ah, the tape of sinners ... I don't want to see it ... take it away from me ... I'm afraid of it, so many sinners ... On the face of one of the visionaries, abundant tears flowed and she was heard to say: "Mercy, mercy."

The Virgin told the girls that what saddened God and Her the most was mortal sin.

## **DETACHMENT OF FAME**

At the beginning of the afternoon, the girls usually went to the village - sometimes from the morning - or shut themselves up in their houses, leaving it sporadically and quickly. They said that the Virgin told them to be home. In general, they did not pay attention to the public. They did not show any concern, if, after many people had come, there was no vision and the public had to leave disappointed. The reason why they liked people to come was "for them to believe".

See this fragment of the vision of August 8: "I was going to make the sign of the cross, but my hand was impeded (they were holding it tightly) ... yes, as you want ... I don't have anything else. We have not given any proof and people do not believe. If you want, at any time, I'm going ... I don't know, but I'm very happy, I don't want to know. I have never thought about it ... When you want and how you want ... It is the same for me to go anywhere... Right now everywhere .... (Where they had had appearances) ... People say that we suffer from a disease ... that we are ill ... nothing else matters if you are happy with us... They say we're alone ... "

## **MODESTY**

The modesty of the visionaries in their way of dressing, walking, talking, looking, etc., is the fulfillment of the advice repeated several times by the Virgin. They did not like that women come with big necklines or smoked, etc ... In fact, one of the girls refused to take a photograph with a lady who had a low neckline.

## **VOCATION**

The four girls said they were going to be Carmelites. This idea as such, was prior to the visions, but they talked about it with the Virgin and she just smiled. In one vision, one of them said: When I'm 15 years old, I'll fix the papers and at 16 I'll go to the convent."

The girls said that they would like to go together, but if the Virgin told them to go separately or to go to another place, it would be the same for them as long as the Virgin were the one who told them so.

## **PATIENCE**

When treating them, it can be perceived that their patience is great. They preferred to be away from the crowd; but since the Virgin told them to respond when they could, they did it with sweetness.

When people saw them, they touched them, kissed them and they have even cut their hair and the girls have never been angry. When people talked to them and they were tired, especially in very crowded days, they just kept quiet and smiled.

I asked them: "Why don't you get angry?" And they answered me: "The Virgin told us to be nice and to answer, if we could". Nor have they shown anger with those who, because of their songs, dances or drunkenness, had hindered the visions.

## **ENVY**

In spite of envy being such a feminine defect, I have not observed in them the slightest trace, in what refers to the number of visions.

When the visionaries did not see the Virgin, they were not envious of those who saw her, but they asked these to tell the Virgin to appear soon. But contentment and a lovely humility was evident in the midst of their desire.

## **Part V- COMPLEMENTS**

To what has been aforementioned, it is convenient to add the following brief information. These data serve as a complement to what has been stated previously.

## **THE PRIESTS**

From the beginning, the visionaries manifested a special predilection for priests and religious. The girls would often pay attention to their habits and they would tell the Virgin.

When asking the girls: Who do you want to come the most?

They always answered the same: the priests.

When referring to obedience, they always said that the Virgin had told them to obey their parents and priests.

## **THE ENEMY**

Quite frequently, the girls and their parents have been told that the visions came from the enemy. Their parents' concern and sufferings have been great.

On August 29, the trance began at about half past twelve a.m. Loli had prepared a bottle of holy water beforehand and sprinkled it to the apparition - it was the Virgin - while saying: "For the enemy". Later Loli said that when she sprinkled with holy water, the Virgin smiled.

Reading the story of Lourdes I found this phrase: "Bernadette got up and began to pour holy water on the vision. The Lady smiled "(Redemption, August, September, p. 354, para. 49).

It is very frequent within each trance that they cross themselves with the utmost devotion, even correcting themselves if they had done something wrongly. The action of making the sign of the cross was repeated several times during each trance as well as the prayer of the Rosary and the station to the Blessed Sacrament.

## **THE GIRLS' OBEDIENCE**

As a result of the visions, the girls had acquired a spirit of obedience, not only in deed but in words. They said that this was what the vision recommended, and consequently they put it into practice. It is said that it was the Blessed Virgin the one who told them to obey their parents and priests.

Among many cases, I have personally verified the following:  
1- Mari Cruz's mother, the youngest of the four, ordered her daughter to stay at home. She stayed while the others went to the pines to see the vision. When the girl was told to go with the other girls to the Pines, she would reply: "No, my mother doesn't let me go".

When they insisted that it was better to see the Virgin, she replied: "The Virgin told me to obey."

2 - The Bishop recommended that during the trance states, the Church should be closed to avoid disrespect from the public, who may have good will, but were eager to see the girls. This measure pleased the girls' parents and the villagers, who had no desire of showiness. The first day that the Church was closed, the girls in a trance state, went to the Church. When they saw it closed, they turned around. This behavior lasted during several trances. You could hear them asking the Virgin why they did not open the Church.

Suddenly they said: "Ah, then it's fine." At the end of one of the trances they said: - We wanted them to open the Church but Our Lady said that what the priest does is fine.

3- In the light of nervousness and uproar caused by the numerous visitors, the girls' parents decided to have their daughters at home behind closed doors, once they felt the first call and not let them out. After a trance, the girls said that the Virgin had told them that, if their parents ordered them that, it was fine and that they would see her at their homes. And this is what happened. In a trance state with the voice of Fr. Luis, they said: "Don't go!". Well, when you want you can go away."

In the dialogue of August 8, in the last vision of the night, there is an interesting case of obedience, which I have mentioned when speaking of the contempt of their own fame, and in which they repeated the phrase "as you wish ..., whatever you want ..., etc."

Obedience, even against the vision or the contemplation itself, is one of the instances most often cited as a signal. See what Fr. Lallemand says: "Far from separating from obedience, it is preferred, and its execution is enabled ... God wants us to proceed like the saints, who, with their submission, deserved to be more exalted than they would have been if they clung to their own revelations. It is only to be feared that superiors would sometimes allow themselves to be led by human prudence and, without further discernment, condemn the lights and inspirations of the Holy Spirit, having them for dreams and illusions. Even in this case, one must obey. But God will someday correct the error of these reckless men and teach them at their expense, not to condemn these graces without knowing them and without being able to judge them "(Doctr. Para. 4, c. 1).

### **THE VISION'S OBEDIENCE**

From the call to the ecstasy, the contrary test has been made because it appeared less dangerous. Instead of calling them to return to reality when they were in a trance state, the opposite has been done, a schedule was set for the vision to appear. As it is the ecclesiastical authority who must do it, I distinguish two cases:

1- Fr. Valentín went to Conchita's house and said: "Look, it is not possible that we are all waiting at this time, so I am going to give you a quarter of an hour. I'll give you three warnings and the last one will be to go to bed. This is the first warning." 10 minutes after, Fr. Valentin returned and said: "This is the second warning, if nothing happens after five minutes, you'll go to bed because it's too late." Two minutes after Fr. Valentín had left Conchita's house, she went into a trance.

2- That same day and without Loli and Jacinta knowing anything of what had happened, I carried out the same test. The two girls were waiting for the vision. They had already had two calls. As it was late I told them: "We can't wait any longer. I'll give you five minutes. If nothing happens in those five minutes, go to bed. "

When there was a minute left I told them: "There's only one minute left. You'll count up to 60 and if nothing happens, to bed." They began to count aloud like at school, humming. When they reached number 17, without finishing it, they were stuck, with the classic blow of raising their heads.

Among others, the following test has been done: Fr. Valentin indicated to the girls that they asked the Virgin if she appeared to them in body and soul. The girls did it and the Virgin answered them ... that she did not appear in body and soul but in a different way, but that it was Her.

That was asked by Fr. Valentín as proof, since he had read that the apparitions are not in body and soul and the girls did not have the capacity to discern between one thing and another, since they only said that they saw the Virgin.

Other tests have been done, such as telling the girls to ask the Virgin whom they have to obey, her or the priests. The test to tell the girls to ask for useless things has also been done: "Where is this man from?" and the answer was: "Our Lady tells you not to ask nonsense."

## CONVERSIONS

The people who have come to Garabandal have experienced diverse reactions. Among the spiritual effects, there are many changes of life; as far as I know, two conversions to Catholicism. These conversions were from Protestantism. One of them was an old person. Both conversions are now in the period of instruction and preparation for the final step. After thirty years of writing this report, these people thank God for having given them the grace of their conversion in Garabandal.

### Part VI- KNOWLEDGE OF PEOPLE

Among the various cases I have become aware of, I will describe one I have witnessed myself.

1- On September 4, at night my brother arrived in Garabandal. He came from America. When we arrived, we were greeted by two of the girls, Jacinta and María Dolores. I told them that my brother had come from South America to see them. As we were talking, Conchita entered in a trance. She went to Ceferino's house, stood in front of us and crossed herself. She went up to the first floor - everything in a trance state - and from there she answered the questions that the other girls asked her.

- Who has come?

C- Father Andreu and a brother of his.

-Where has he come from?

C- From Caracas ....Where is he? Ah .... here one and here another. This one is blond ...

According to the data that we can possess, the little girl Conchita did not know that my brother had come from Caracas although she possibly knew he had come from somewhere in America, nor did she know the detail that he was blond.

When I later asked her how she knew, she answered that the Virgin had told her.

### ANOTHER KIND OF KNOWLEDGE

1- On one occasion, the girls got on their knees - in a trance state - and prayed a "My Lord Jesus Christ" before each person. When a little boy or girl came, until 7 years old, they prayed a "Hail Holy Queen" instead of "My Lord Jesus Christ".

2 - Loli and Jacinta gave the crucifix to be kissed by all those who were present and went out into the street while they were in a state of trance. Lolita was at home and Jacinta was in the street. When Lolita began to kiss the crucifix inside the house, Jacinta came running from the street in a trance and said: "Where is a crucifix? The Virgin told me to give it to be kissed. The two went out to the street each on their own way and, in addition to the public, they offered the crucifix to the sick.

A foreigner who had fallen ill also received the girl's visit in one of the houses of the village where she was staying.

Although each girl went through different streets, they coincided exactly at the door of Conchita's house, which was not in a trance and in two other houses.

3- One of the girls made the crossed over to a group of people except one. This person was heartbroken at that moment. The parish priest asked the girl when she was in a normal state, why she had not crossed that person. The girl replied that the Virgin had told her that such person was the only one who had crossed herself in the morning ...

4- A good person, who had come and who was extremely indifferent to what he saw, gave a third person a crucifix to be given to the girls so that the vision could give it a kiss. This third person put it in the girls' hand. The third person reached out to receive the crucifix from the girl, who, making a sudden movement, put her arm over her shoulder and handed it back to the owner of the crucifix directly, who was left visibly moved.

5- A lady requested with great interest that the girls asked the Virgin if her husband believed in God. The answer was: "Yes, he believes in God. In the Virgin he believes very little, but he will." In fact, the lady's husband was Protestant and he lived in Madrid.

6- A man on his knees, mentally asked for the conversion of his son-in-law. As he was asking that he was approached by a girl in a trance and she said in his ear the word "yes", which the closest ones could hear. When he asked the girl, in a normal state, why she had said "yes", she replied: "The Virgin told me, here there is a man, tell him yes". I insisted on what that "yes" was and she said: "I don't know, the Virgin only told me to say yes."

7- On August 8, Loli lost a decade of the rosary belonging to my brother, Fr. Luis, which had the size of a medal. She lost it on the way from the pines to the Church.

When she realized that I had lost it, when my brother her asked for it, she said he would ask the Virgin. She did so and the following day she found it.

8- On August 15, when one of the girls carried a rosary that I had given to her, when she returned it, the cross was missing. It had loosened and got lost. Given the impossibility of finding it, since it could have been anywhere in the town, I decided to forget about it. Twenty days later, on September 5, I told the girls to ask the Virgin for the cross of the rosary and they did so. I heard the dialogue in which they asked for it and the exact place where the small cross was. Immediately, at the end of the trance and without any hesitation, the cross was found in one of the streets, under a stone in the mud.

## **KNOWLEDGE OF CONSCIENCE**

They gave the girls five holy cards to be kissed by the Virgin. The visionary gave them one by one to the vision and who was kissing all but one that she refused to kiss. The owner of this stamp, visibly moved, came to me crying and saying that she wanted to clean her conscience. Shortly after, she gave her holy card to a girl in a trance once again and the girl, after listening to the Virgin and smiling, offered it in the first place to be kissed. The person to whom this happened authorized me to tell this anecdote.

I suddenly saw one of the girls in a trance state on her knees going directly towards a person. This person started retreating but the girl always on her knees, cornered him. There the girl smiled and after a few moments, the girl left. The impression that this scene caused to the person the girl was so great that it surpassed what appeared to be normal. The explanation was given to me by that person. Being anguished by the thought of whether his confessions had not been well done, this person asked God and the Virgin the following: "If my past confessions are well done, make the girl come to me." Just after finishing her mental prayer, the girl, from the other end of the attic, went to him on her knees without paying attention to the other people.

## **HIERGNOSIS**

Although some of the previously mentioned cases can be grouped here somehow, I am going to set them aside to follow an order.

1- Several times the girls in a state of trance have said that there were priests when they were not seen, or that there were more than the ones who were dressed as such. I mention two cases: When a small group of priests had left, apparently only Fr. Valentin remained along with many other people. The girls went into a trance in the Church and talked about the number of priests saying that there were two. One Fr. Valentin and another. Upon hearing this, Fr. Valentin looked back to try to find this missing priest. Suddenly, he was approached by a man who, after changing some sentences with him, said he was a priest and that he had not come dressed as priest because he had gone by motorcycle.

2- Another case of this type is the one that refers to the recognition of other priests dressed as civilians and that when hearing what the girls were saying, out of fear of being publicly identified, just left. This is what the girls in trance said.

3- Regarding the prayer of the rosary without counting and without making mistakes whenever the girls have been asked, the same answer has been obtained: "The Virgin tells us when the glory comes".

4- On the knowledge of objects previously kissed by the Virgin there are many cases. Thus, the recognition of a stone previously kissed by the vision which was mixed with a small pile of stones without kissing. When raising it so that the vision would kiss it, the girl said: "What? Was it already kissed? ... Well, kiss it again."

5- They gave a girl a medal to be kissed. Another day they gave another girl the same medal. When she lifted it up, she said: "What? Was it already kissed? ... Well, can you kiss it again?"

6- Among a lot of rosaries and medals, they put one that had already been kissed. The girl had them in one pocket and as she gave them to be kissed, she would pass them to another pocket. When she reached to the medal in question, she took it out along with two rosaries. She lifted the three objects and before the vision kissed them, after making a gesture of having heard something, she left them on the floor. Then, she only took the rosaries and continued giving the other objects but not the medal that had already been kissed days before.

Note: sometimes when giving the vision objects that had already been kissed, they say: "Kiss them again". Sometimes, the girls do not say anything.

Hierognosis: etymologically speaking, this term makes reference to the knowledge of the sacred, the faculty that some saints had, especially the ecstatic ones, to recognize the holy and sacred objects by differentiating them immediately and without hesitation.

## **THE CALLS**

The phenomenon of the calls or touches that indicate the beginning of the ecstasies arises in these four girls in the following way. Generally, we could say that there are three calls.

- the girls can have them at the same time, being together.
- they can have them not exactly at the same time, being together
- they can have them at the same time, being separated.
- they can all have them, or only one girl or two or three or the four of them.

The nature of the calls. It was not easy for the girls to describe it. They said it was like a clear unmistakable inner joy.

In other cases, they said that it was as if the Virgin told them:

1st call: Jacinta!

2nd call: Jacinta! come!

3rd call: Jacinta! run, run, run!

But all these calls were inner and without words.

The difference between the call and the trance  
1- The call did not isolate them from reality, but the trance did. The girls concealed the calls and if they did not tell anyone specifically, nobody realized they had received one.

2- In the calls they did not hear words. In fact, they insisted that they were interior calls and without words. When the girls were in trance, they could hear syllabic words, some of which they could not even understand.

3- In the calls they saw nothing. In the trance they saw light, people, etc ... These are the three main differences.

The meaning of the calls

The word "call" has been coined by the girls themselves who used to say:

Today the Virgin did not call me.

Today she called me.

I had a call, two, etc ...

And in other cases, the vision said goodbye "until tomorrow."

Cases I have observed myself

Loli was pouring water in a glass so that Mr. Matutano could take an aspirin when she felt the third call and leaving the jar and glass said: "Come on dad, she's calling me."

On another occasion, Jacinta and Loli were with two girls and with three priests. When Conchita told me she had had the second call, I went to her house along with another priest. I asked Conchita: "How many calls have you had?" And she replied: "Two, father." At the same time, Mari Cruz, who was with Conchita, said: "The Virgin hasn't called me". I said: "Well, then go to bed" and she obeyed.

There are many other incidents concerning the calls. Perhaps what can be explained here is what Father Arintero O.P. posits in his book "Mystical Evolution", p. 460, (BAC) "And without touches, inner words and caresses from which the ecstasies arise; the abductions, the intellectual visions and other excellent graces are best experienced than explained".

The first call gave the girls the certainty that the Blessed Virgin was coming. The second call comprises a greater joy or caress that indicates a greater proximity. These could be possibly compared to the "mystical touch". The third call presents a difference with the previous two; since the ecstasy begins as soon as this call starts. Hence, the girls were able

to notice that the third call had already started and it gave them a margin of time, as they once told me: "Father, there is only one line left". I was writing at that moment and I can testify that things took place as the girls had explained.

In other occasions, they say: "Father, it the second and a half now." That measure indicates the beginning of the third call. That "half" measurement indicated the beginning of the third call. As regards to this phenomenon or to a similar one, the children at Lourdes and Fatima ran towards an oak.

Fr. Royo Marin says that the way to go into ecstasy appears to have some relationship with the third call, a call the girls cannot resist. The followings are some data taken from Father Poulain: "Saint Philip Neri was not sometimes able to finish praying his breviary unless he was praying with a companion; otherwise, he would be taken by an ecstasy and would sink into God, abandoning the prayer. Saint Joseph of Cupertino would often reach dusk without being able to pray the breviary, although he had tried many times. For 35 years their superiors exempted them from participating in the choir ceremonies, the processions and even the refectory owing to the continuous ecstasies that interrupted the activities of the community.

It was a true miracle - says one historian - that in the midst of his ecstasy, the saint could finish saying his mass. As soon as he finished, he would run to his cell, screamed and fell to his knees in ecstasy. St. Ignatius of Loyola was exempted from the prayer of the Breviary for the same reason "(Theology of Christian Perfection No. 430).

## **Part VII- ADDITIONS**

### **CONCHITA IN SANTANDER**

One of the things that can be read about the story of Lourdes is the following: "The commission reported a lot of vagueness and since it was interested to make Bernadette disappear from that scenario, the conclusion of the report was that, although it might be not necessary, it was convenient to take her to a health house. The intervention of the parish priest Peyramale prevented Bernadette from being locked up in an asylum". I know what my duties as pastor are", he said firmly to the authorities. It has not been proven that this girl is crazy, and therefore, I will not allow her to be locked up ... When the people of Lourdes learned that they wanted to take Bernadette, it almost mutinied.

When the eldest of the four visionaries, Conchita, was transferred to Santander to the Bishopric, accompanied by her mother, she had an ecstasy in which she saw the Blessed Virgin and another day she had a speech. She did not have more visions, as it seems, in Santander, until she came back to Garabandal. Among the things that the girl did in Santander, Conchita was taken several days to the beach. The girl said she was shown photographs and that they did other tests to her (by order of the Bishopric, without a doubt, who was the one who sent for her). The purpose was to remove her from the environment in which the girl lived and it was thought to be able to influence the visions (So why is it that Conchita had a vision and a speech in Santander?).

Back to Garabandal and without asking the girl especially about the time she stayed in Santander, she, in front of some other people, told me: "The Virgin told me that in

Santander she did not come to see me anymore because I was going to the beach, but now I have confessed". They asked her if she wanted to be a pastor or a young lady and she answered she preferred the latter. When I told her if the Virgin would like her to be a lady, he replied: "And why wouldn't she want me to learn?" I said: "And how are you going to learn? And she replied: "Like the others." When I did not understand the meaning of her words, I asked her: "And what is it to be a young lady?" And she told me: "Go to school."

Regarding other incidents during her stay in Santander, there are several versions that come to me; I prefer to silence them here, assuming that the girl, before certain questions or documents of certain people, might have not told the truth, for fear of being punished or imprisoned. I cannot handle this data until I have an authentic version of them. At the moment I have the information given by Conchita's mother, but I prefer to consider it partial, although it may not possibly be such at all.

The data provided by Fr. Valentín (the parish priest) is that the girls in Garabandal, in a trance, said that the Virgin told them she was meeting Conchita there (in Santander).

According to the data of Fr. Valentín, the warning coincided with the vision of Conchita in Santander.

## **THE VIRGIN SMILES**

The girls of Garabandal have been told to ask things to the Virgin, for instance if she would perform any miracle as proof. Girls also asked many questions on their own. They said that when the Virgin did not want to answer, she smiled.

Reading the story of Lourdes and Fatima, we find the same attitude. The visionaries of these places say that when they asked the Virgin and the Lady did not want to answer, she just smiled.

The girls themselves behaved in the same way. When they did not know how to answer the questions they were asked or when they were tired of questions, they smiled and kept silent. They sometimes said: "I don't know" if they did not know the answer. In other cases, when alluding to the secret, their answer was: "We can't say it".

## **THE TAPE RECORDER**

The first days of August, a man carried a tape recorder and recorded what the girls said in a trance in the pines. The following account was provided by Mr. Jose Salceda de Aguilar de Campoo, eyewitness of what I will describe above.

At the end of the ecstasy, the tape recorder was played so that the girls could hear it. After that the girls were told to ask the Virgin to speak by the tape recorder.

While still engaged in this conversation, suddenly the girls entered in ecstasy. In this state, they asked the Virgin to speak through the microphone, so that her voice could be recorded.

Once the trance had ended, the girls went to their homes, accompanied by their parents and by those who had stayed, who were many people, the girls played the tape recorder to see how everything had been recorded. When it came to the girl's phrase, in which they

asked the Virgin to speak, "an unmistakable sweet voice was heard" (in Mr. Jose's own words), who, coming out of the device, said "No, I don't speak".

Such was the excitement that many started crying and saying that they should take the tape to the Pope. Nevertheless, when they played it again, when they reached the sentence mentioned before, they were not able to hear anything.

They went down bewildered to Conchita's house, who had not participated in the aforementioned ecstasy, so that she could hear what her companions had said during the ecstasy. When they reached the sentences mentioned, they were able to hear again a voice saying: "No, I don't talk". When Conchita listened to it she smiled and said very happily that it was the Virgin who spoke. They wanted to hear it again, however, the Virgin's voice has not been heard since then.

The girls said that the Virgin smiled when they told her to speak into the microphone. Something quite similar took place in Lourdes, although both the period of time and the means available have to be taken into account.

I quote Redemption (August-September, page 354) "...They continued praying the Rosary. When it finished, the lady (one of Maria's daughters) gave the girl an ink bottle, paper and a pen and said: Ask that Lady what she wants and ask her to put it in writing". Bernadette obeyed. She got up and headed towards the grotto. A few moments later she returned to the two women: "The Lady smiled when I told her that."

## **VISIONS AND IMAGINATIVE LOCUTIONS**

If we were to classify these girls' visions or locutions within the three commonly referred categories, they would mostly fit in the so-called visions or imaginative locutions.

They do not seem to be bodily as the sight does not act in a normal way. Thus, the eye, although open, does not seem to see, according to the tests performed. It retains, however, some attenuated pupil reflex before a strong light, but not the eyelids, which remain open despite throwing a beam of light.

The way they express themselves when describing what they see or when saying what they hear, the visionaries do it in a sufficiently concrete way. This is when they describe the angel, the Child, the Virgin, etc.

In some moments they seem to immerse themselves in something deeper. Then they are neither able to talk nor they can explain well what happens.

After leaving their state of trance, the girls say that they do not remember well what they said, but they do remember everything the Virgin told them.

## **FATHER ROYO MARÍN**

Fr. Royo Marín was in Garabandal on August 8. Although he climbed as everyone, skeptical, in view of what happened that day, he changed his mind and said repeatedly: "Although I'm not infallible, but an expert in the field, I have four pieces of evidence that cannot fail and make me say that this is supernatural".

Given Fr. Royo Marin's prestige, wisdom and publications on the subject matter in question, especially his book "Theology of Christian perfection", it is convenient to consider his opinion in order to carry out a serious study concerning the events of Garabandal. He has repeatedly expressed his grounded opinion.

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Some events of Garabandal which usually lead to bewilderment and which directly refer to the performance of the girls are as follows:

- 1- The frequency and long duration of their trances.
- 2- The part of the dialogues that refers to children's issues and irrelevant topics.
- 3- The fact that many of the trances occurred at night.
- 4- Different types of ecstatic walks.

Our assumption that it is not easy to understand all the phenomena taking place there, since neither in the field of psychiatry nor in that of mysticism, it is normal to encounter phenomena of this magnitude. Both psychiatrists and theologians have to move in the field of theory and history, to look for more or less analogous examples that have taken place in other occasions.

In any case it is always customary the intention to give simplistic solutions and even more to ground these solutions in some isolated cases instead of taking into account the entire phenomena.

#### **DIALOGUES ABOUT IRRELEVANT TOPICS**

This is perhaps the greatest difficulty for the simple and poorly educated public. As we have already said, this was the main problem the public had in Lourdes with Bernadette Soubirous. They heard her talk about ordinary topics and saw her do strange things, such as staining her face with mud and eating grass. We have mentioned this fact when commenting on the theme of the visions.

Regarding the postures of the ecstatic walks there nothing else to say but to observe what happened to the mystics with respect to the multiple positions in which they remained. The observation that is always made is that these positions are neither improper nor immoral. This was a sign used to distinguish the true mystics from the false mystics at the times of the Enlightened Ones.

#### **FREQUENCY**

The fact that so-called visions took place so frequently raises the following problem:

- 1- Are girls capable of doing something so that a trance can take place? They spend many hours in a normal state and then two or three trances happened and sometimes more, without a preceding signal, giving the impression that they enter and leave according to the will of the vision itself.
- 2- Can God choose the hours of the night to dispense his special favors to the souls he wants?

Although we have previously said something about the story of some mystics, whose lives looked like a prolonged ecstasy, we now add the clear signs of passivity that the girls of

Garabandal presented. They are sometimes seen with a lively desire to see the Virgin and yet they do not succeed. Other times, when they do not expect it, they feel the first call or simply go into a trance.

And in any case, the frequency of the visions are things of God, it is not up to men to regulate them as far as their number, duration or timetable is concerned.

Wanting to submit them to a fixed schedule would be similar to regulate seismic movements.

Regarding trances at night, it should be considered that many saints have had the main visions during the night.

The Lord made it clear to them that at that hour of sin he was more pleased to deal with friendly souls.

In the story of Garabandal, the visions began at dusk. Others have occurred in the morning and afternoon. Until after long weeks, the visions did not occur at night. This new schedule began when the avalanche of the public was large, and their behavior was not always appropriate.

In fact, the most interesting manifestations have taken place when most of the spectators had left. The visions have never been based on the public, but, in any case, it has been the other way around.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is still a series of events in San Sebastián de Garabandal that I leave for further research.

Given the interest that these phenomena represent in the scientific field, since they can hardly be grasped, not even in a laboratory, it is always very interesting to observe everything that happens there carefully, whatever the cause of these phenomena may be. At the end of this report I want to state that my sole intention was to provide serious data witnessed and listened to in order to contribute to those who will have to give a grounded opinion someday.

Source: [www.garabandal.it](http://www.garabandal.it)

## **MONSIGNOR JOAO PEREIRA VENANCIO, BISHOP OF LEIRÍA-FÁTIMA**

*"The message given by the Blessed Virgin in Garabandal is the same as She gave in Fatima but updated for our time".*

*"In Garabandal, the Blessed Virgin updated her Message of Fatima for the church of today."*

Monsignor Joao Pereira Venancio, Bishop of Leiria-Fatima, Portugal, has been the Bishop whose name will always be known for his connection with Fatima and Garabandal. It was during his pastoral position that the "Third Secret of Fatima" was taken to Rome.

Bishop Venancio was well-known for his profound piety. He frequently talked to Sister Lucia, the visionary of the Marian apparitions at Fatima, and also visited Conchita, the visionary of the Appearances of Garabandal.

Father Alfred Combe, head of the Garabandal Movement in France, narrates his meeting with Bishop Venancio.

Father Combe says:

On July 21, 1983, while accompanying a group of pilgrims from Saint-Etienne, France, to Fatima, I had the joy of being received by Bishop Venancio and of having a long and private conversation with him. Now I can publish this unforgettable interview, but there are a couple of things I would like to mention before:

1. That the first time I met this holy Bishop was in Leiria, in the Office of the Chancellery in 1961.
2. That I knew that on two trips he made to the United States, he visited Conchita twice, who is the main visionary of Garabandal and who has been living in New York since she married in 1973.

These visits were not casual since Conchita was well known by sister Lucia of Fátima.

3. An important detail: I had in my right hand a ring that the great apostle of Garabandal, Joey Lomangino, gave me in 1977, when I visited New York. He had given the same gift to Conchita and to several priests and laity, all "workers" of the Holy Mother, as a sign of our "communion" and collaboration in spreading the message of Our Lady.

The conversation with Bishop Venancio went like this:

P. Combe: Excellency, I am very grateful to you for receiving me in this private audience. This is our second meeting.

JP Venancio: Dear father, my memory fails me. Please, help me remember.

P. Combe: The first was in 1961. I came from France to implore from his generosity a statue of Our Lady of Fatima for a great French-Portuguese event, which I was organizing in the district of Lyon, an act that had great resonance throughout the region, as it brought together more of 10,000 people.

JP Venancio: I remember perfectly. I gave you a statue with a special blessing, since it was one of the four that had made the "peace journey" after the Second World War. On that day of adoration, I sent you to the Rector of the great Basilica of Fatima ordering him to give you the statue of Our Lady. When he returned to Fatima he told me about the magnificent program and party that left him impressed, as well as the quality of the religious program.

P. Combe: But all that program, Excellency, was for the Grace of God and for your benevolence. Did you know that this statue of Our Lady of Fatima has brought many spiritual and temporal blessings? Still today she is venerated in my private chapel. In my home I have a photograph of you in the home of a young woman you visited in New York. She is someone Lucía knows.

JP Venancio: In Conchita of Garabandal's house. Yes, dear father, I have noticed that you have a ring on your finger that tells me more than you think. Yes, I went to visit Conchita in New York. I was delighted with the hours I spent at her home with her family. And I'll tell you something, she had the gentle act of removing the ring she had on her finger, like the one you wear, and she gave it to me saying:

- Excellency, I'll give this to you only until your death.

I accepted it and like you, I have always carried it, for years, with my pastoral ring. As you can imagine this has brought endless speculations, not very discreet indeed, even on the part of some of my brother bishops. I have used this ring until this year, 1983, but since I am very advanced in age and I wanted this ring to be returned to its owner before my death, I sent it to Conchita several weeks ago, with a thank you letter and my most heartfelt blessing.

P. Combe: Excellency, what you have told me now has been a great revelation for me. I thank you for sharing it with me.

JP Venancio: My dear father, are you the French priest who works to spread the message of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Garabandal, Spain?

P. Combe: Yes, Excellency, and it is because that I have the joy of meeting you today.

Then, something unexpected happened, something that left me so astonished that I still have trouble telling it, however I must say it with simplicity: Bishop Joao Pereira Venancio got up and knelt at my feet. Then he took my hands in his and looking at me fixedly he said to me:

- Blessed be you and thank you, dear Father, for the wonderful apostolic work that you are doing for Our Lady of Mount Carmel of Garabandal.

Then the Bishop sat down in front of me.

P. Combe: I am all confused by your gesture, Mr. Bishop, but very grateful for your words, not for me but for the Message of Garabandal.

JP Venancio: This message given by the Blessed Virgin in Garabandal is the same as the one She gave in Fatima, but updated for our times.

P. Combe: I have always thought the same, Excellency, but you emphasize the word "updated". Would you like to explain it?

JP Venancio: It's very simple. In 1917, at Fatima, the Virgin did not warn us of the crisis that the Church suffers today, and how much it hurts us; crisis of doctrine, of catechism, of morals, of liturgy, of discipline, of priesthood, of religious life, etc., and as a result the great confusion of the faithful. Why? Because there was no reason to warn of those dangers in 1917.

In fact, at that time the situation was normal and some things were perfect. Do you remember how the Eucharistic piety, the Marian devotion, the Christian sense of sin, the frequent reception of the Sacrament of Penance, the liturgy, the fidelity to the Pope as Peter's successor were then?

In Garabandal, in 1961, the situation was already different. We did not see the great dangers that were coming, but the Blessed Virgin saw them. And because She is Mother and Prophet, she came to that little Spanish village to give us and, explicitly, to warn us and call us again to prayer, sacrifice, penance and conversion. In other words, in Garabandal, She updated her Message of Fatima, for the church of today.

P. Combe: Conchita of Garabandal has often said that the message of Our Lady of Mount Carmel was a "message of salvation", so we could add, "a message of salvation for our time".

JP Venancio: For me it is obvious.

P. Combe: What you are saying about the crisis and the resulting confusion in the very heart of the Church, reminds me of something that a great theologian once said, Father Lucio Rodrigo, Rector Emeritus of the former University of Comillas, in the diocese of Santander.

After the appearances of Garabandal, around 1967, I met this Jesuit and we became great friends. One day he said to me:

- In Garabandal, the Blessed Virgin predicted the priestly crisis and the great confusion in the Church. These prophecies have become true. All with a vision and gravity that no one in that small village could have foreseen, because not even the theologians, with all the vast knowledge we have, had the slightest suspicion.

And this eminent theologian added:

- For me, just that is more than enough proof that the message of Garabandal was of supernatural origin.

JP Venancio: This is a reliable and enlightening reason, although Garabandal does not lack other credibility tests as you well know. Now tell me, Father, have you had any recent news about Conchita and her companions? Would you like to tell me, in your opinion, what the Bishop of Santander and Rome thinks about Garabandal?

P. Combe: At this time I informed the illustrious prelate of the few news I had.

And that's how our conversation ended.

P. Combe: Thank you sincerely, Excellency, for giving me this interview. I will keep your words in my heart as a source of joy and peace. But before leaving I would like to ask you one last favor. That you may bless me and my group of French pilgrims.

JP Venancio: With all my heart. First to you and then to your group.

P. Combe: On my knees, I received his blessing, then I thanked him.

JP Venancio: The blessing to your group will be given to you in my name. I give special permission and allow you to give my episcopal blessing to your group on my behalf. And in return I want to receive your blessing.

P. Combe: I refused, all confused. However, at the Bishop's insistence, who was already on his knees before me, I agreed and I did so with great emotion: "I bless with all my heart this great and holy Bishop of Fatima". What a memorable interview!

I declare before God that all the details that I am telling here are true. I dedicate this to all the "workers" of Our Lady of Mount Carmel so that they feel courage and also to all the Bishops and Priests of the Church.

**Father Alfred Combe, France, July 21, 1983.**

## **SIGNIFICANT CONSIDERATIONS ON THE WARNING AND THE MIRACLE PROPHESED IN GARABANDAL**

The political, social and religious scenario in the times of the Warning. Communism, the great persecution, a Church that will seem to have "disappeared".

1973. CONCHITA GONZÁLES:

Q. What will occur on the day of the Warning?

A. The most important thing about that day is that everyone in the whole world will see a sign, a grace, or a Chastisement within themselves - in other words, a Warning. They will be completely alone in the world at that moment, regardless of where they are, alone with their conscience and before God. They will then see all their sins and what their sins have caused.

Q. Will we all feel it at the same time?

A. Yes, at the same time.

Q. How long will it last, half an hour, an hour?

A: I honestly don't know. I think five minutes would be enough.

Q. How will we feel it?

A. We will all feel differently because it will depend on the conscience of each one. The Warning will be very personal, so we will all react differently. The most important thing will be to recognize our own sins and their bad consequences. You will have a different view of the Warning than me because your sins are different from mine.

Q. Will something happen to me because of my sins? I mean, will I suffer physical damages because of my sins?

A. No, unless it's something resulting from a strong impression, for example, a heart attack.

Q. So then it will bring no physical harm but will consist of facing God alone with my sins. How about the good things; will I also see them?

A. No. This will be only a Warning to see the consequence of our sins. It will also be like a purification before the Miracle, to see if with the Warning and the Miracle we convert.

Q. So this warning can occur at any time?

A. Yes, but I don't know when it will occur.

**February, 1977. MARIA DOLORES**

Q. Have you ever discussed with Conchita the dates of the Warning of which you know the year, and the Miracle which she knows?

A. I have never talked to Conchita about these dates.

Q. Have you got any pieces of advice for the people in order that they might prepare for this event?

A. To do much penance, to make sacrifices, to visit the Blessed Sacrament every day that they are able to, and to pray the Holy Rosary daily.

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**October 19, 1982 MARÍA DOLORES:**

Q. Do you remember what the Blessed Virgin told you about the communist tribulation that will precede the Warning?

A. It would look like the communists have taken over the whole world and it would be very hard to practice the religion, for priests to say Mass or for the people to open the doors of the churches.

Q. Is that what you meant when you said that it would seem as though the Church has disappeared?

A. Yes.

Q. Would it be because of the persecution and not because the people would stop practicing their religion?

A. Yes, but I guess a lot of people will stop practicing. Those who practice it will have to do it clandestinely.

Q. Will it only happen in Europe or also in other continents?

A. I don't know, because at that moment, Europe was for me the whole world. I simply assumed it was like that. The Blessed Mother didn't specify the place. To me it looked like it was everywhere.

Q. Nowadays, communism dominates a part of the planet. Do you think that's sufficient to fulfill Our Lady's prophecy?

A. I honestly don't know. It seemed to me like it would be more than that.

Q. In other words, you think it will be worse than what is happening now?

A. That's what I thought from what she said but I really don't know exactly. To me it looked more like it was in every country of the world. I saw many places in my mind. In a lot of European countries, you can still practice your religion.

Q. So, the situation in the world is not bad enough for the Warning to take place?

A. The Warning is not going to happen yet so it's probably that things would get even worse.

Q. You said that it would be very difficult for priests to say Mass. Did the Blessed Virgin tell you or did you think it yourself, as a result of the prophesied communist tribulation?

A. From what I remember, it was something she said.

Q. And did the Virgin say that it would seem as though the Church had disappeared?

A. Yes.

Q. Have the Blessed Mother ever said anything about the Holy Father having to leave Rome at the time of the Warning?

A. No, but that's what it looked like to me - maybe at that time I was confused in my mind what I was seeing and what the Blessed Mother was saying to me because it's been so many years now - but what it looked like to me was that the Pope couldn't be in Rome in broad daylight either, you know what I mean? He was being persecuted, too, and had to hide just like everybody else.

Q. You said that when the Warning comes, the planes will stop in the air and that all the engines will stop. Did the Holy Mother tell you this?

A. She said that everything, everywhere, for a moment would stop and people would just think and look inside themselves.

Q. Will there be any noise with the Warning like the wind blowing?

A. The way I saw it at the time, it was more like a big silence, like a sense of emptiness. Everything was very silent. This is how I saw it.

Q. Seven years ago you said that the Warning was going to happen soon. Many people thought it would happen around this time. What would you say today?

A. It will be soon. Everything looks soon to me because time goes by so fast.

Q. You're the only one who knows the year of the Warning. Have you ever told it to anyone else, like a priest for example?

A. No.

Q. Will the world be at war when the Warning takes place?

A. (There is no answer).

www.pueblodemia.com

GARABANDAL '*The Time Has Come!*' stands as a compelling supplement to the movie *Garabandal, only God knows*, recently released in several countries with an unexpected number of spectators.

Santiago Lanús delves into the powerfully moving and hope-filled story of the appearances of Our Mother in Garabandal (1961-1965) in a succinct way without omitting essential details and by giving priority to testimonial evidence, especially of those prominent figures appearing in the movie, such as Brigade Mr. Juan Álvarez Seco, Fr. Valentín Marichalar, Dr. Ricardo Puncernau, Neuropsychiatrist and Fr. Ramon M. Andréu among others.

Fr. Justo A. Lofeudo's insightful and thought-provoking reflections concerning the messages are also included. Furthermore, Mr. Rafael Jardón Mendez's (1946-2011) explanations regarding some profound and complex concepts have been added, demonstrating that this scholar and great apostle of Our Mother has few equals when it comes to Garabandal.

The prophecy, especially the Warning, the great Miracle and the conditional Chastisement are dealt with in a very special way. As the reader will notice throughout the chapters, God's love for each one in particular is notably highlighted as well as His passionate desire to trigger a great change in the Church and in the world through her Blessed Mother.

**FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF GOD  
AND FOR THE  
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

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