

Book Page I

The apparitions of

GARABANDAL

*To my mother (d. Feb. 8, 1961)
from whom I first learned to love
the Blessed Virgin.*

THE AUTHOR

Book Page II

*The original book was published
in Spain under the title*
LAS APARICIONES
NO SON UN MITO
el interrogante de Garabandal

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www.garabandal.org

Book Page III

F. SANCHEZ-VENTURA Y PASCUAL

The apparitions of
GARABANDAL

Translated from the Spanish

by

A. de Bertodano

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE
Book Page IV

The name of Garabandal, the village of the Apparitions, is becoming well known throughout the world. San Sebastian de Garabandal, to give it its full name, is a small village lost in the Northeastern mountains of Spain, where seventy families lead a hardy existence, some 90 kilometers (55 miles) from Santander. None but detailed maps show its location, and it is easy for the unwary traveler to mistake for *San Sebastian de Garabandal*, the resort town of *San Sebastian*, which lies a little further along the Atlantic coast, near the French border.

Ever more frequently, notices were seen to appear in the Press, relating strange events, prodigies, conversions, as well as messages attributed to Saint Michael the Archangel and the Blessed Virgin Mary. Controversy sprang up around these events, specially in Spain and France, where it became difficult for the layman to sift out the facts, unless he was able to travel to Garabandal and find out for himself.

At last, Mr. Monroy, the Editor of a Tangier newspaper, *La Verdad*, sparked a reaction by making public his utter disbelief in *all* apparitions which, according to him, were nothing but a pure myth. An interested lawyer, who also holds the Chair of Economics and Legislation at the University of Saragossa, refuted these arguments in a book which, in Spain, was published under the title of "Apparitions are not a myth — The enquiry into Garabandal."

This is the book which we are now presenting, thus making available to the English-speaking public on this Continent all the carefully gathered documentation of an author whose professional experience was likely to make, more than anyone else perhaps, a sober, cautious and trustworthy witness.

For ease of reference, the author broke down the material of this book into small sections numbered from 1 to 70 — this edition preserves the author's section numbering system. The original book however, opened with a rebuttal of Mr. Monroy's arguments which are not of such burning interest here as they are in Spain. It was thought preferable to transfer the first two chapters of the Spanish edition (sections 3 thru 11) to the end of this book, where they will be found under Appendix A and B.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Book Page V

The author solemnly declares that this book has been submitted to eminent theologians and official censors, and that all the corrections they suggested have been included.

In spite of this however, and in response to valid suggestions to that effect, it was decided at the last minute not to apply for the "imprimatur", to avoid placing the ecclesiastical authority before a request for approval of a book that contains the relation of certain events that have not yet received official sanction. Such an "imprimatur" might have been interpreted by some as an implicit acknowledgement by the Church of the supernatural origin of a series of phenomena that are still under examination.

In due obedience and submission to the hierarchy, the author places this book unconditionally in the hands of the ecclesiastical authority, and hereby declares that he is prepared to omit or modify whatever that authority may wish to see omitted or modified; he accepts the ecclesiastical authority's decisions for or against Garabandal, as and when the matter is brought to a conclusion. He also offers to withdraw this publication at the slightest suggestion to that effect on the part of the Archbishop of the diocese to which he belongs.

F. S-V. y P.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Book Page VI

I should like to acknowledge the invaluable assistance given me in compiling this book by many eyewitnesses of the events recounted in these pages.

Through them, I was able to gather countless reports, films, letters, photographs, tape recordings and other testimony of all kinds, the very abundance of which served to cross-check their authenticity and enabled me to write the short account which I now present in newspaper report style.

My heartfelt thanks to them all, and very particularly to the Marqués and Marquesa de Santa Maria, Dr. Gasca and Dr. Ortiz, Don Placido Ruiloba, Don Alejandro Damians, Don Jose Maria Concejo, Don Maxima Foerschler, Señorita Carmen Cavestany and Señorita Ascencion de Luis.

At the same time as expressing my gratitude, I should like to offer to them, without prejudice to my author's rights, any possible profits the sale of this book may bring, to be made available for whatever work they may consider most suitable among the many that are now, or will later be devoted to spreading and publicising the messages of the Blessed Virgin.

My sole intention in so doing is to follow the example that I have always been given by this splendid group of friends and helpers of selfless zeal and enthusiasm for their magnificent apostolic work.

F. S-V. y P

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Archboshop Letter**Book Page 8**



R. F. Gustavo Morelos
P R E S E N T E.

Estimado Padre:

Teniendo en cuenta las indicaciones de la Santa Sede y del — Excmo. Ordinario de Santander (España), así como lo prescrito por el Código de Derecho Canónico, aprobamos y bendecimos la publicación del Mensaje de la Sma. Virgen en San Sebastian Garabandal en nuestra Arquidiócesis, sabiendo que, a la luz de la Divina Revelación, nos urge la necesidad de la oración y del sacrificio, del culto a la Sagrada Eucaristía y a la Sma. Virgen María, y la obediencia, amor y adhesión filiales al Vicario de Cristo y a la Sta. Iglesia.

Por consiguiente, no encontramos en este Mensaje, atribuido a la Sma. Virgen, nada contrario a la Fé y a las costumbres, y si oportunas, útiles y saludables amonestaciones para obtener la salvación eterna.

La obediencia en acatar pronta y filialmente las disposiciones de la Iglesia, ha sido la característica de las personas que han sido favorecidas en estas apariciones, y por tanto, es una clave segura para todos, de que Dios está aquí.

La prudencia de la Sta. Iglesia en relación a este importante asunto, se ha manifestado en el estudio atento y pastoral vigilancia, y de ninguna manera, en prohibición y rechazo del mismo.

Uno de los Oficiales de la Sagrada Congregación de la Defensa de la Fé, Mons. Philippi, declaró al Revmo. P. Elias, Superior del Carmelo en la Ciudad de Puebla, que lo consultó en Roma sobre las apariciones de la Sma. Virgen en Garabandal, que el hecho de que el P. Pio, reconocido por su virtud, ciencia y adhesión a la Santa Sede, apruebe estas apariciones, y aliente a las 4 niñas Videntes a propagar el Mensaje de la Sma. Virgen, es una grande prueba de la veracidad de las mismas.



Dado en Jalapa de la Inmaculada, 8 de Julio de 1966

+ *Manuel Pío López*
Arzobispo de Jalapa Ver.
Manuel Pío López, Arzobispo de Jalapa

Archbishop Letter
Book Page 9

To:
Rev. Gustavo Morelos,
CITY

Dear Father:

Keeping in mind the indications of the Holy See and of His Excellency the Bishop of Santander, as required by Canon Law, we give our approval and blessing to the publication in our Archdiocese of the Message of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary at San Sebastian de Garabandal, knowing as we do, in the light of Divine Revelation, that we are urgently required to practice prayer, sacrifice and devotion to the Holy Eucharist and the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, and to display filial obedience, love and faithfulness towards the Vicar of Christ and the Holy Church.

We consequently find nothing in this Message, attributed to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, that is contrary to the Faith or morals; rather do we note its opportune, useful and beneficial admonitions for the attainment of eternal salvation.

Prompt and filial obedience to the provisions of the Church has been the characteristic of the privileged persons in these apparitions, and this is a sure mark of God's presence for everyone to see.

The Holy Church showed its wisdom in relation to these important events by giving them careful study and by exercising pastoral vigilance; it did not issue any kind of prohibition or rejection.

One of the Officials of the Sacred Congregation for the Defense of the Faith, Msgr. Philippi, who was consulted in Rome by the Very Rev. P. Elias, Superior of the Carmel of the City of Puebla, on the subject of the apparitions of the Most Blessed Virgin at Garabandal, stated that the fact that Padre Pio -- well known for his virtue, his knowledge and his faithfulness to the Holy See --acknowledged these apparitions, and encouraged the 4 Visionaries to spread the Message of the Most Blessed Virgin, was great proof of the authenticity of these apparitions.

Given at Jalapa de la Inmaculada on the 8th of July 1966
Manuel Pio López, Archbishop of Jalapa (Mexico)

Introduction

Book Page 10

1.—Señor Juan Antonio Monroy recently published a book called *"El Mito de las Apariciones,"* or "The Myth of Apparitions." On the cover was a photograph of the persons involved in the supposedly miraculous events at Garabandal. The book was published in Tangier by Editorial Pisca. And on the very first page there stands out starkly a definition by Ethelbert Stauffer which is taken as a motif: "What is myth? . . . Myth", he replies, "is the language of all religion."

Monroy, editor of the newspaper "La Verdad", has taken the seemingly miraculous happenings at San Sebastian de Garabandal as a pretext to write what is nothing less than a blatantly violent attack on the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. To Monroy's mind, San Sebastian de Garabandal is no different from Lourdes and Fatima, which he considers a quagmire of contradictions and skillfully baited pitfalls laid by the Church to trap the unwary.

His book is written in the easy narrative style of the man in the street, and it is precisely as a man in the street that I feel obliged to counter it. I am interested in the subject of apparitions, too. In 1961, I wrote a book

entitled "*Estigmatizados y Apariciones*" (Stigmata and Apparitions), in which I delved into these incomprehensible occurrences in the world of the supernatural.* Monroy and I are not theologians, and we probably both lack sufficient grounding to be able to deal authoritatively with matters of this nature. The subject intrigues us both, however, and we have likewise both studied it and then taken the daring step of publishing the fruits of our investigations. But there is one fundamental difference between us. Monroy (so he says) believes in God alone, and in the Bible. The author of this book, for his part, feels fortunate in believing in everything else, too. As a practicing Catholic, I accept all the Church's decisions with sincere and humble faith. Consequently, even before studying the subject, I firmly believed in the apostolate of the Blessed Virgin through her apparitions, and since I began examining them, my faith has strengthened and

* Further proof of the interest that the author has always taken in visions is the fact that, on August 31st, 1964, the *Teatro Pereda* in Santander saw the premiere of his play called "*Mensaje de Luz, El Misterio de Fatima*", performed by the Mary Carrillo Company. The author used the nom-de-plume of Ventura del Val.

Introduction

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my enthusiasm grown. I firmly believe in Our Lady of Paris and in La Salette, in Lourdes and in Fatima, etc. And, after what I have seen and experienced there, I also believe that, at San Sebastian de Garabandal, there have taken place, and still are taking place, a series of phenomena beyond any natural explanation . . .

Since Monroy has taken Garabandal as a pretext for an attack on the Catholic Church, I shall similarly take the defense of the Church as sufficient reason to print a simple, bystander's account of the events that have occurred, and still are occurring, at this little Cantabrian village. For the happenings at Garabandal have not fizzled out like a damp squib, as some would like to make out. Far from it. Garabandal is, to my mind, very much alive. The story grows ever more exciting with the promise of a public miracle to be announced in advance when the time comes. Indeed, if the events related here are not due to supernatural causes, then this very promise will be the undoing of Garabandal. Unless their prophesies were unquestionably true, what need had these little girls to make such a prediction, which would only serve in the long run to give away the whole farce?

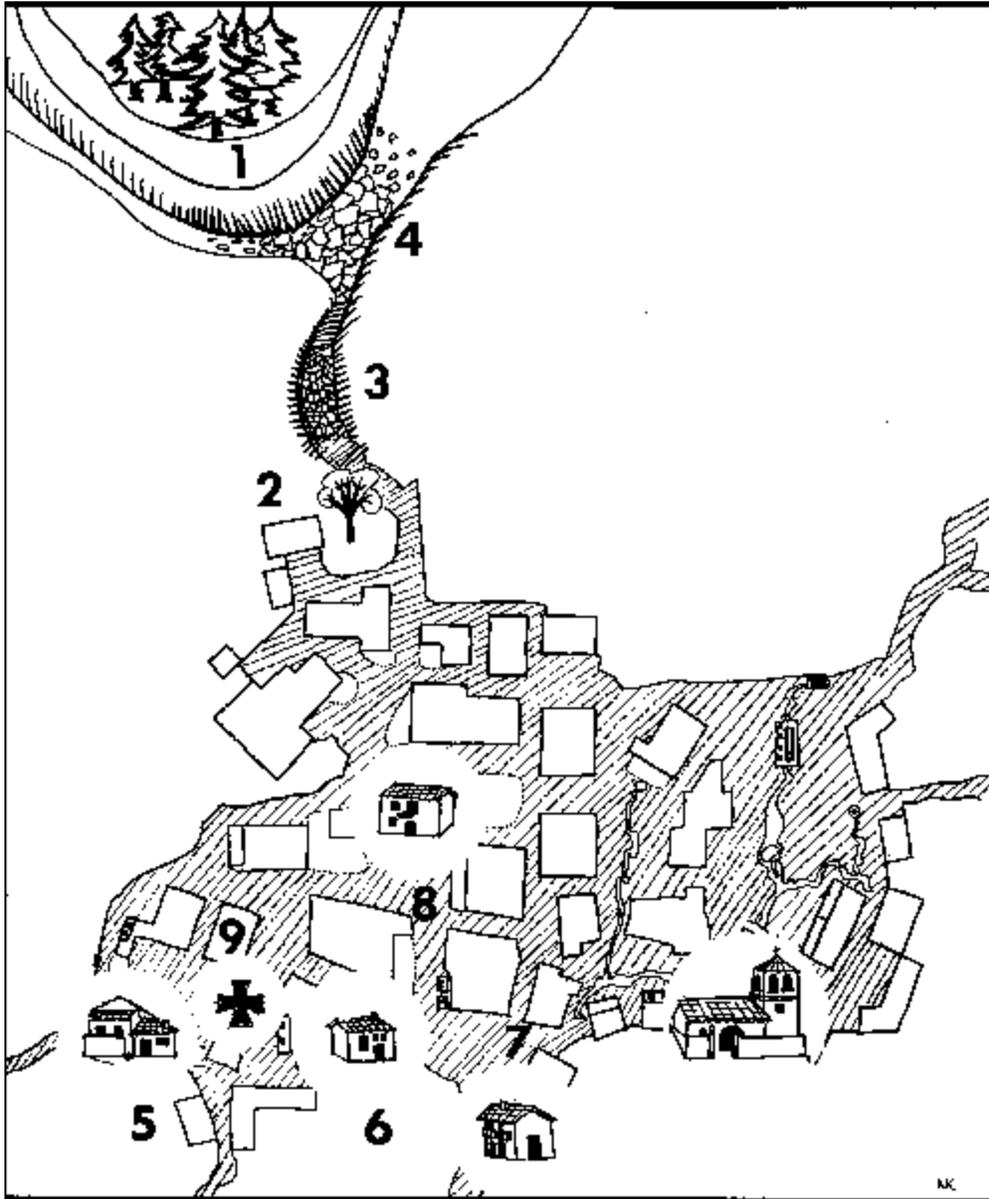
2.—In the opening chapters of this book,* I intend to reply to Monroy's attacks on the Church and on those apparitions that have been officially approved by the ecclesiastical authorities. In the second part, I shall give the reader a brief account of the incidents at Garabandal (although in all cases with the reservations necessary when speaking of inexplicable events not yet sanctioned by the Church).

The second part will be submitted to the Church censors, as was my previous book "*Estigmatizados y Apariciones*", which received their approbation. This does not imply, however, that the censors' approval of my book is tantamount to recognition of the supernatural causes of these phenomena, which must still continue to be investigated at great length. Hence, when I use such terms as "vision," "ecstasy," "rapture", "Blessed Virgin", etc., they are to be understood simply in respect of what the eyewitnesses say and hear, and the reader should not take them to be an assertion of a proven fact.

But, in the light of Monroy's ruthless attacks, conscience moves me to counter his affirmations with a simple chronicle as objective, sincere and fair as possible, keeping in mind that, under certain circumstances, an omission can be as misleading as outright deception . . .

* Now transferred to Apendix A and B

**Map of the village
Book Page 12**



Map of the village showing

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 | The Pines |
| 2 | The apple tree |
| 3 | the "cuadro", where the Archangel St. Michael first appeared |
| 4 | The "calleja", or sunken lane |
| 5 | Conchita's house |
| 6 | Jacinta's house |

- 7 **Maria-Cruz' house**
- 8 **Loly's house**
- 9 **The scene of the Miracle of the Host**

Chapter One
REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH
Book Page 13



12—In the apparitions known as those of Our Lady of Paris, the Virgin forewarned Sister Catherine Labouré of the disasters that would befall France and the world at large. "The time is near when there will be great danger," Our Lady said. "Everyone will believe all to be lost. I shall be with you all. Have trust in Us. Do not fear."

In these terms Our Lady of Paris made an appeal from heaven for faith and hope. The Virgin asked people to have recourse to her ... On her fingers she wore rings covered in precious gems which gave off flashing rays of light. "The rays of light," she explained, "are the graces which I give those who ask me for them." Then, an oval frame formed around the vision, and on the border there appeared the following words in golden letters. "Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee."

"Then," Sister Laboure recounts, "I heard a voice saying to me, "have a medal struck according to this picture. All those who wear it will receive great graces; these graces will be abundant for those who wear it with faith . . . '*"

* The front of the medal bears an image of Our Lady with her hands stretched out and downwards, and from them proceed rays of light, symbols of the graces granted by her. She is standing on the globe of the world, around which is coiled the serpent which squirms as it is crushed. Around the frame can be seen the words, "Oh Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee". So, the Blessed Virgin appears as Mother Immaculate, victorious over evil and Queen of the Universe. On the back of the medal is further consolation in symbolic form. Mary's initial "M", surmounted by a cross standing on a cross bar. Below are two hearts, one crowned with thorns and the other pierced by a sword. The Hearts of Jesus and Mary united in their common mission of expiation for mankind. The Kingdom of the Son of God is thus based on the kingdom of Our Blessed Mother, which serves as a triumphal chariot. These are the symbols and meaning of the miraculous medal which awoke religious fervor in France and spread it throughout the world. This was

the first apparition of the 19th century, and from this moment there began an movement of mankind towards God.

Chapter One

REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH

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On this occasion, the Blessed Virgin was presented as the mediator of heaven. She announced disasters, but she assuaged the fears of her children, promising them her assistance, and offered to grant the graces that they requested with faith. Our Lady's words were to be fulfilled to the letter. This was the pointer for all.

Once the medal was struck, its use spread like wildfire. All those wearing it with faith obtained the graces that they requested. Despite the general coldness towards religion, and the scepticism spread by the French Revolution, the reaction of the faithful was astonishing. For us, as human beings, this is the best proof of its authenticity. The Abbé Guillion published the story of the medal in a book called "Nouvelle Historique", of which five editions had to be printed in a single year to meet demand. The medal was at first turned out at a rate of more than a hundred thousand a month, but this proved insufficient, and production soon soared into the millions.

In one of Sister Catherine's descriptions of the vision, she comments on the sentence, "Mary is Queen of the Universe and of each one of us individually." She adds: "It will be a long-lasting period of peace, joy and happiness. *She will be carried in triumph and will travel around the world.*"

Here, to my mind, is a prophesy that has already come true. The title of the book in which it appears is "*La Vénérable Catherine Labouré*", published in France by Edmund Crapez. That *triumphal tour of the globe by Mary* seems a clear allusion to the journey of Our Lady of Fatima, whose pilgrim statue travels incessantly to all parts of the world.

In the apparitions of Our Lady of Paris, there is one circumstance that has been repeated at Garabandal.* As Our Lady left Sister Catherine after her final vision, she said to her: "You will not see me again, but you will hear my voice in your prayers." When the visionaries at Garabandal ceased to have visions, they began to experience this new mystical phenomenon, supernatural locutions in which they held an inward conversation with Our Lady, "hearing her voice without words."

But the story of the Miraculous Medal would not be complete without the case of the conversion of a young Jewish banker, Alphonse Rathisbonne. After making a name for himself through his hatred of Catholics following his brother's conversion—and subsequent ordination in the Society of Jesus—providence dictated that Alphonse should go to Rome, where he met an acquaintance, the Baron de Bussièrès. De Bussièrès told him numerous amazing

* [See Section 20 in connection with locutions.](#)

REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH**Book Page 15**

stories of occurrences connected with the Miraculous Medal, and begged him to accept one, eliciting from him the promise to wear it. Rathisbonne made it clear that it was a waste of time, since he was a Jew and would die a Jew. But they came to a strange agreement. As proof of the fact that he had not faith in the medal and was not afraid of its "marvelous powers," Rathisbonne promised to wear it round his neck and even to invoke it from time to time.

That promise was the cause of the prodigy, for Rathisbonne himself had a vision of the Blessed Virgin and was converted to Catholicism under most extraordinary circumstances. After so many years of open hatred of priests in general, and Jesuits in particular, he finally followed in his brother's footsteps and entered the Society of Jesus.

The extraordinary circumstances surrounding this much publicized conversion, of which ample records exist, are yet further pointers helping men on the way to belief.

La Salette (1846)

13—A brief glance at Our Lady of La Salette, simply covering a number of the most convincing arguments, the cases or circumstances that best serve to uplift our faith. Ordinary mortals are like St. Thomas and need to be able to touch Christ's wounds with their hands to believe. God understands this need of our reasoning minds and constantly provides us with tangible proof of the existence of the supernatural.

At La Salette, Melanie Calvet, aged fifteen, and Maximin Guiraud, aged twelve, suddenly saw a globe of motionless light. This opened out, and inside they saw another, brighter moving light. Within this radiant orb was Our Lady.

"If my people will not submit," she said to them, "I shall be forced to let the arm of my Son fall on them." *And she listed a whole series of calamities that were threatening the world.*

"If sinners repent, the stones and rocks will turn into heaps of wheat, and potatoes will be sown by themselves." Here again, the message confirmed the connection existing between sin and suffering, the state of grace and peace; the whole concept being applicable, not only to the other world, but to this one, too. "The stones and rocks will be turned into wheat. . . "

This doctrine is not a new one. In Exodus (XV, 26) we read "If thou wilt listen to the voice of the Lord thy God, and obey his commandments, and observe all that He bids thee observe, then I will never again bring upon thee all that misery I brought upon thee in Egypt."

Chapter One**REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH****Book Page 16**

Were those perils, foretold in 1846, subsequently confirmed by historical events, or not?

The Blessed Virgin announced that *by Christmastide there would be no potatoes left* because of the total failure of the crop. So it came about that peasants all over France and abroad, particularly in Ireland, began to suffer from acute starvation as winter progressed. The French newspaper "*Gazette du Midi*" of January 28th, 1847, and the London papers of January 21st, of the same year told the sorry tale. "The losses caused by the failure of the crops in Ireland alone are estimated at twelve million pounds sterling, the equivalent of three hundred million francs."

"The wheat will be worm-eaten and will fall into dust," said Our Lady. And, true enough, in 1851, disease attacked the grain crops and caused incalculable losses throughout Europe. *L'Univers* wrote, on July 15th, 1856, "We opened a few dry ears of wheat. Some did not contain a single grain; others held very small grains, totally unfit to feed anyone. In both types of ears, we found a yellowish dust and a few little insects which are undoubtedly the cause of all these ravages. Anyone can see this new phenomenon for himself in any wheat-field ..."

"There will be a great famine . . . Some will do penance through hunger." The price of wheat in 1854 and 1855 rose to sixty francs a hundredweight, and, according to "*Le Constitutionnel*" and "*L'Univers*," in 1856, a hundred and fifty-two thousand people died of starvation in France alone, while other papers gave an estimate of more than a million in all Europe. On December 12th, 1856. "*L'Univers*" said: "For the euphemism 'death caused by want,' read: 'died of misery and hunger'."

The Spanish Government bought sixty million reals-worth of wheat to stave off starvation. In Poland, the Government raised its civil-servants' salaries by a third to help them meet soaring food prices.

"Little children will be seized with trembling and will die in the arms of those who are holding them ..." The prophesy began to come true in 1847, in the canton of Corps. In 1854, all over France seventy-five thousand died of ague. The symptoms were an icy coldness which later made the child perspire copiously, causing a constant shivering and bringing death after a couple of hours of fearful suffering.

"The walnuts will be worm-eaten and withered." In 1852, a report sent to the French Ministry of the Interior stated that, the preceding year, a disease had totally destroyed the walnut crop in the regions of Lyon, Beaujolais and Isère. It added that this was a great

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REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH

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calamity for the regions in question, since walnuts were one of the mainstays of the local economy.

"The grapes will rot ..." A plague began to attack grapes at this period, as a result of the importation of American vines; it is a century since phylloxera and mildew first began to ravage vineyards.

The punishments announced by Our Blessed Mother as proof of the authenticity of her message were fully confirmed. The apparition took place in 1846, and the newspaper reports that we have mentioned begin with the year 1847 and cover the period ending in 1852. So, the forecasts began to come true immediately.



The Immaculate Conception (1858)

14.—Between February 11th and July 16th, 1858, the Virgin appeared eighteen times to Bernadette Soubirous, a fourteen year old girl from Lourdes.

It is a well-known story. The vision gave her the same message as usual, and insisted that people should do penance. But, at the same time, she acknowledged the proclamation by the Church on December 8th, 1854, of the first glory of Mary, her Immaculate Conception.

We have already seen the origin of the miraculous spring at Lourdes, when Bernadette scooped out some earth at the vision's bidding.

The Cafe France in Lourdes was the meeting place of the intelligentsia who were opposed to such mystical phenomena and everything else to do with religion. On behalf of science, they appointed Dr. Dozous to put an end to this superstitious tomfoolery.

Chapter One **REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH** **Book Page 18**

Taking upon himself the role of representative of rational men the world over, men who need to see in order to believe, the doctor made his way to the grotto and approached the child. He felt her pulse. His cronies were hanging on his every word and gesture. But Dr. Dozous kept a prudent silence. The fact was that he could not believe his eyes. That first day, when he returned from the grotto, his only comment was: "I still don't know anything at all. It is not possible to get a clear idea after a single examination. I shall go back again."

And go back he did. When asked whether he had seen anything, another intellectual who had

accompanied him, replied without a trace of his flippancy of the eve: "I saw the impressive expression on Bernadette's face".

From close at hand, Dr. Dozous watched in puzzlement as Bernadette moved about at the invisible being's commands. The doctor was impressed by the ease with which the young girl scrambled up the slope on her knees. He watched as she scooped away some soil, and he saw the water burbling irresistibly forth. But there was something else that surprised him even more. This, for him, was decisive proof that there was no natural explanation for what his eyes beheld.

"She was on her knees," said the representative of the world of science, in his description of the scene, "reciting with angelic devoutness the prayers of her rosary, which she was holding in her left hand, while in her right she had a thick, lighted candle. At the moment when she began to climb the slope on her knees as usual, there suddenly came a halt in this movement. Her right hand approached her left, and she placed the flame of the heavy candle beneath the fingers of her left hand which were spread apart so that the flame easily passed between them. A fairly strong breeze got up at that moment, and made the flame flicker, but it did not seem to cause any harm to the skin it touched."

"Astonished at this strange occurrence, I prevented anyone stopping it, and, taking out my pocket-watch, I timed it for a quarter of an hour."

"After this interval, Bernadette, who was still in a state of ecstasy, separated her two hands and advanced to the top of the grotto. In this way the action of the flame on her left hand ceased."

When the child came out of her trance, Dr. Dozous examined her hand, but could find absolutely nothing the matter with it. He then asked her to relight her candle and, taking her hand, he forced it into the flame. The child jumped back sharply, complaining that he had scorched her.

Chapter One

REASONED ARGUMENTS TO FAN THE FLAMES OF OUR FAITH

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The Blessed Virgin taught the young girl how to make the Sign of the Cross. Many accounts mention the ample, graceful motions with which Bernadette imitated Our Lady, making the Sign of the Cross with the Crucifix on her rosary from the time of the first vision onwards. This act, impressively dignified in so humble and ignorant a child, brought tears to the eyes of all who witnessed it.

Then came the miracles, increasing in numbers from the 5th to the 25th of March. And they have never ceased from that day to this. The most spectacular cures at the time were those of Eugene Oroy of Bareges, Henri Busquet, Denis Bouchet, Croisine Ducoups, etc. But, most important of all were the spiritual cures that packed the churches and confessionals to overflowing. It was in those early days that the first pair of crutches was hung in the grotto, an offering by a paralytic who recovered the use of his leg when it came into contact with the Lourdes water. Since then, the spring has continued to flow, and with it has come an incessant stream of pilgrims.

The medical bureau at Lourdes subjects the most inexplicable of the cures to meticulous study and analysis.

I cannot resist the temptation to include here the personal testimony of the Most Rev. Fr. Arrupe, S.J., who was elected General of the Society of Jesus in May 1965.

In his recollections of life as a missionary in Japan, Fr. Arrupe gives an account of the beginnings of his vocation. While a medical student at the San Carlos Faculty in Madrid, he took the opportunity of spending a month in Lourdes. "I was full of curiosity when I arrived in Lourdes." His was the curiosity of a practising Catholic, but also of an undergraduate in search of the truth, and rather inclined to be skeptical. It did not take him long to reach the conviction that "life in Lourdes is a miracle". Critical in attitude and inclined to be scientifically argumentative, the student was lucky enough to witness the verification of three cases of miracles at the *Bureau de Constatation* or Medical Records Office. "I had so often heard some of my professors at San Carlos ranting against the mumbo-jumbo at Lourdes . . ."*

Fr. Arrupe was able to check these miracles himself. Today, he is recognized as an international authority on psychiatric medicine. As he himself writes: "I must admit that those three miracles, of which I myself was a witness, deeply impressed me. After studying my profession in an irreligious university atmosphere where the professors did nothing but launch diatribes against the supernatural on behalf, so they said, of science, I found God three times through three miracles."

* Most Rev. Fr. Arrupe, S.J. "Este Japón Increible", PP. 16 to 20.

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Our Lady of Fatima (1917)

15.—As time went on, the Virgin's apostleship grew more and more spectacular and, consequently, her messages for the world became easier for mankind to believe.

Our Lady put every effort into her mission. She was generous in her intercession, announced exactly where she would next appear, and promised a spectacular miracle so that everybody would believe. These were the circumstances in her apparition at Fatima. The Blessed Virgin promised to return on the 13th of every month for six months in succession. She announced a miracle for noon on October 13th. With the general faith growing gradually weaker, a special helping hand was needed, in the shape of supernatural assistance to raise mankind up to God. So, Our Lady's miracles would have to be more convincing because of Man's greater resistance to faith and, also, perhaps, because the "Cup" of divine justice was gradually filling and the threat of a possible punishment was ever more imminent.

"In October, I shall tell you who I am and what I want of you. And I shall work a miracle which all must see to believe."

The message was fundamentally the same as all her previous ones. She appealed for people to make sacrifices in reparation for sinners; she asked people to say the rosary to obtain peace in the world and an end to the war; she showed the children a vision of Hell, where the souls of impenitent sinners go. To save us. Our Lord wished to establish the devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Holy Communion of expiation on the first Saturday of the month . . . "If mankind does as I ask, many souls will be saved and there

will be peace. The war (1914-18) is going to end, but, if men do not stop offending the Lord, another worse war will begin under the next pontificate. When you see a night made bright by a great unknown light, be sure that it is the sign sent by God and that the punishment of the world is at hand through war, famine and persecution against the Church and against the Holy Father."

This sign from God in the form of a strange light came on January 25th, 1938. The newspapers of January 26th referred to this surprising event seen all over Europe. It happened between ten and eleven o'clock at night. On the coast of Belgium it was seen as a rainbow; it had a dark red and violet glow. At Briançon, post-office workers were able to work by this aurora without any other illumination. The descriptions of the phenomenon differed from one place to another, but there were many eyewitnesses in different countries.

This is one piece of evidence supporting the apparitions at Fatima.

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Another is the attitude adopted by the visionaries when Oliveira Santos, the mayor of Ourem, kidnapped them, locked them in jail and threatened to have them all "fried alive in a great big fryingpan." He led them away, one by one, pretending that he was carrying out his threats. Though fully convinced that they were about to be burnt alive, nevertheless, all three heroically accepted death rather than recant or betray the secret confided to them by Our Lady.

But the principal proof lies in the miracle of the sun, which can not be refuted however closely it is studied.

History tells us of no similar case: a miracle announced in advance as if it were a public spectacle, even with all the trimmings of prior publicity. From the farthest corners of Portugal and even from abroad, pilgrims came in their thousands to witness the big event. More than seventy thousand people are estimated to have been present on the day. The Liberal Press sent reporters after declaring that, the following day, they would report the end of the farce. But the story was not published in any of the papers with atheistic leanings, except those which, despite their ideology, did not mind publishing the truth and admitting that a truly inexplicable event had taken place.

In utter amazement, the multitude watched the miracle. The sky peeped through as the clouds dispersed. The rain stopped instantly. In the center, like a silver moon, was the orb of the sun. All at once, it began to revolve like a pinwheel, casting forth flashes of multi-hued flames. The dazzling glow of every color in the rainbow, yellows, reds, greens and blues, was reflected on the clouds, trees and hills, a fantastic scene of Nature unleashed by its Maker. Within a few minutes the sun ceased its dance and began to shine with a light that did not dazzle the eyes; then, the crazy whirling was resumed. This prodigy happened three times; and, each time, the dance became wilder and the colors brighter. "And throughout the unforgettable twelve minutes that this breathtaking spectacle lasted, the crowd stood there in gaping suspense, contemplating the overwhelming drama which could be seen for more than 25 miles."

The sun suddenly flew from its place in the firmament and crashed earthwards on top of the crowd. A deafening shriek was wrenched from every throat. Some fell to their knees, some screamed, some prayed . . .

When it was near the earth, the sun halted in its tracks and, then, slowly, majestically, it returned to its normal position in the sky. It recovered its usual dazzling brightness. The sky was a clear, cloudless blue. The spectators *en masse* began to recite the Credo. Their clothes, which had been drenched with rain a few moments earlier, had dried out in an instant. The enthusiasm was

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indescribable. The Blessed Virgin had kept her word, and mankind now had the proof it needed in order to believe. Fr. Federico Gutierrez wrote of Fatima: "This spectacle was clearly seen three times, in the space of more than ten minutes, by some seventy thousand people, some believers, others unbelievers; some, simple citizens, others men of science. The children had announced the exact day and hour in advance. No astronomical observatory recorded the phenomenon, and this is sufficient proof that it had no natural explanation. Some saw it several miles from the actual spot." *

Rumors of the miracle spread like wildfire throughout Portugal and beyond the frontiers. It was reported in the Press all over the world. Lisbon's leading newspaper, "*O'Seculo*", published long articles under headlines that read: "Amazing events", and "How the Sun Danced at Noon over Fatima". Paulino D'Almeida, head of the editorial staff and a man who had boasted of his incredulity, published an article of his own in "*O'Seculo*" on October 15th, 1917, entitled "In the Midst of the Supernatural". The article read as follows: "And then, we witnessed a unique spectacle, incredible for those who were not there to see it... The sun was like a plaque of tarnished silver. It did not dazzle the eyes! It was as if there had been an eclipse . . . But, all at once, a great clamor arose: 'A miracle, a miracle!' Before the terrified gaze of the pale-faced, bare-headed multitude, whose behavior was reminiscent of Biblical times as they contemplated the blue sky above, the sun started to tremble. It began to move erratically in a way never seen before, in defiance of all cosmic laws. The sun 'started to dance', as the peasants themselves described it ... All we need now is for the experts to explain to us, from their dizzy heights of knowledge, the meaning of the macabre solar dance which today drew cries of 'Hosannah' from the throats of thousands, a sight that reliable sources report as having greatly impressed even the freethinkers, and other people without any religious inclinations at all, who witnessed this historic dance."

The message was fully confirmed. The voice was truly that of Heaven speaking to our generations. It spoke for our benefit, just as it had previously spoken for our grandparents'. But we who are so exacting need more than this to believe, and Heaven gave us further proof. Like so many St. Thomases, Heaven permitted us to see and touch so that we might believe. How difficult it was to become for modern man to visit Fatima, ascertain that it was genuine from all the evidence, and then find an excuse to flee from his faith.

* Fr. Federico Gutierrez; "La Verdad sobre Fatima", page 44.

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I am sure Monroy * cannot have bothered to leaf through the Portuguese newspapers of that day, such a recent date. I do not suppose, either, that he has seen the photographs that exist; all these pieces of evidence are easily found, and would have helped him to investigate the truth; perhaps he would have greater difficulty in finding evidence to substantiate Samuel's appearance to King Saul...

The two little shepherds, Francisco and Jacinta, died within a short time, just as Our Lady had foretold. Their deaths, amid great suffering, gave them both a chance to show the heroic spirit of their souls, desirous to suffer and offer their sufferings for sinners.

But, the most comforting part of all the message comes after Our Lady speaks of the Russian Revolution as a threat and scourge for the entire human race, when she says: "But, in the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph . . ." Perhaps the part of the message that has remained a secret refers to the moment of her triumph, the date when the reign of the Hearts of Jesus and Mary is to begin. However, there is some fear, and indeed there is now evidence to back it, that that moment will come only after a terrible punishment which will uproot the rotten weeds of sin from the face of the earth, like the great flood in Noah's day.

As little Jacinta constantly repeated throughout her illness, the essential part of the message of Fatima is contained in the words which she used in reply to Dr. Formigal the day after the dance of the sun, when he asked the little visionary what Our Lady had said: "I have come to tell you not to offend Our Lord any more, for He has already been offended too much; if people make amends, the war will come to an end; and if they do not make amends, the world will come to an end."

These words bear a marked resemblance to those of the visionaries at San Sebastian de Garabandal.

Syracuse (1953)

16.—This review of the surprising world of the Marian apparitions would not be complete without a short reference to Our Lady of Syracuse, the Virgin who, as at La Salette, manifested her presence to the world by weeping, stricken by the distasters of mankind. The weeping of Our Lady of Syracuse has drawn thousands of fervent pilgrims who go there to mingle their own human tears with those divine ones shed in Syracuse for four consecutive days and seen by the entire population. There were not just a few, more or less chosen people who witnessed this extraordinary case, but a whole city comprised

* [See Appendix.](#)

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of believers and unbelievers, scholars and ignorant souls, atheists and clergy, millions of people saw the phenomenon during those four days when Our Lady's human tears moved the populace.

The story is a simple one, like all supernatural prodigies. Antonia Giusto, a young working-girl in Syracuse, married Angelo Ianusso when she was twenty. Among their wedding-presents was a simple plaster

wall-shrine which had cost about 3,500 lire in a local shop. Antonia and Angelo were poor, as was only too common immediately after the war, and they had difficulty in finding work, let alone a home. However, they settled in temporarily with Angelo's mother and brother. Antonia was expecting a baby. But her pregnancy was further complicated by a series of epileptic fits and pains of all kinds. The poor woman was very depressed and, seeking consolation in her faith, frequently prayed before the plaster Virgin. The doctors diagnosed her complaint as gestational toxicosis, and she was ordered to stay in bed without moving. Her pain grew worse and worse, and although he had not completely lost his faith, her husband Angelo complained of his misfortune. At heart, he scoffed at his wife's prayers. *

At 8:30 a.m. on August 29th, 1953, Antonia turned to the image of the Virgin for comfort when her suffering became unbearable. To her astonishment, she saw that the Virgin was weeping. She called to her sister-in-law who, not knowing what to do, evidently decided to treat the Virgin as yet another patient entrusted to her care. She carefully began to wipe the Madonna's sorrowful eyes. This done, she summoned the rest of the family.

Meanwhile, Antonia's pains had vanished. She got out of bed and devoted her whole attention to the Virgin's weeping. For some hours, she simply watched the miracle and used handkerchiefs and then pieces of cotton-batting to wipe Our Lady's abundant tears away. Finally, the women came to the conclusion that something had to be done. At someone's suggestion, they called the police. Skeptical and amused, the police arrived on the scene and were taken aback to find that the Virgin really was weeping . . .

By the time Antonia's husband returned home, the house was crowded with people. The local police commissioner, *Chief Ferrigno*, came to see for himself. Not knowing what steps to take, he removed the image to the police station. Our Lady continued weeping all the way. The jeep was bathed in her tears, which trickled to the ground. It was 9 p.m., Saturday the 29th of August. The Blessed Virgin had been crying almost all day long.

* "Estigmatizados y Apariciones", page 192 onwards.

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When they reached the police station, the tears ceased. The officers of the law were at a loss as to what to do with the little shrine, and finally elected to return it to its owner. But, Angelo was frightened to go home to the crowds. Then, he tucked it under his arm and vanished into the night, as if guilty of a crime, trudging from house to house to avoid the crowds who were anxious to see the prodigy at all costs. But the public were not to be placated, and the rumor spread that Our Lady had been arrested by the police. Infuriated at the very idea, they fell upon Angelo's brother, who fled. At midnight, the fugitive Angelo returned furtively home bearing his plaster shrine, which he deposited on some cushions. Mary was weeping again . . .

Next day, Sunday August 30th, a multitude gathered before the house at an early hour. Many had even spent the night there. Police magistrate Nicolas Samperisi came to the scene to calm the crowds. He entered the bedroom and watched the scene. The shrine with the Madonna was propped up on the bed, tears trickling down her cheeks. The impatient crowd were raising a tumult in the street below. The shrine was placed on a little table, and a line was organized so that the public could see the miracle for themselves. The first priest to

see it was Fr. Vincenzo Sapio, chaplain of Syracuse General Hospital. The news had spread, not only to the farthest corners of Syracuse, but throughout Sicily. From all parts of the island people came in droves by car, taxi, bus . . . The line still jammed the street. It was first decided to display the Madonna on the balcony overlooking the street, but it was eventually hung on the wall of a house opposite, belonging to Prof. Lucea, who owned a small front garden protected by a wall. A temporary altar was built and, there, the miraculous statue was installed. And now, there commenced a personal dialogue between the people and their Madonna. The rosary was recited aloud. Graces and favors were implored ... At 11 p.m on Tuesday September 1st, the tears stopped. The pieces of cotton-batting drenched in those divine, yet human, bitter salty tears were distributed through Syracuse and then all over the world. The prodigy was witnessed by people from every walk of life. The Virgin chose a little shrine in the home of a poor working-class family and wept for nearly four days with very few, brief respites. Today, her tears are working wonders on the bodies and souls of undeserving humanity. Antonia never experienced any further pain, and her child was born normally, little knowing that he had been the indirect cause of the Mother of God's tears.

A few days afterwards, letters and telegrams started to arrive from all over the world, addressed to "The Weeping Virgin" or

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"The Madonna of the Tears". The post-office employees heaped them at the foot of the shrine. Photographs had been taken and were handed round. Experts and men of science gave evidence. One such testimony reads as follows: "With the assistance of the police, who made way for us through the immense crowds in front of the house, we entered a bedroom with a single window giving onto the Via Carso. There, at our request, Signora Antonia Giusto unlocked a box in which, wrapped in a piece of linen, there lay an image of the Blessed Virgin which appeared to be made of plaster in different colors, backed by a sheet of black glass."

"The image undoubtedly showed signs of humidity on various parts of the face and chest, but the liquid had been carefully wiped off with pieces of cotton-wool. Only a single drop remained in the corner of the left eye. The said drop was removed with the help of a pipette. One after another, several drops welled up in the same place and were likewise collected.

"While the drops were being transferred to a glass tube, some more tears sprang from the eye and trickled down to the little hollow formed by the hand holding the heart of the Virgin. These tear drops were also collected.

"In the course of these operations, we could not prevent the onlookers from soaking up some tears with pieces of cotton-batting. All together, a little more than one cubic centimeter of liquid was removed to the laboratory.

"The phenomenon lasted almost a quarter of an hour from the time the image was taken from the box, and it did not occur again, so it was not possible to obtain any more material for the analysis.

"The inner corners of the eyes were examined with magnifying glasses, hut no pores or flaws could be seen in the ceramic surface. The plaster image was separated from its black glass backing, and it was observed to be made of a block of plaster from one to two centimetres in thickness.

"The outer part was varnished in several different colours, and the unworked inner face had a smooth white surface which proved to be quite dry on examination."

This testimonial was signed by three doctors and the parish priest, Fr. Giuseppe Bruno.

The original report on the analysis of the liquid is too lengthy to be given here in full, but it ends with the following findings:

"In brief, its appearance, its alkali content and composition indicate that the liquid examined has a composition analogous to that of the human lacrimal secretion.

Syracuse, September 9th, 1953.

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Signed: Dr. Michele Cassola, Director of the Micrographic Section of the Provincial Laboratory.
 Dr. Francesco Cotzia, Assistant Director of the Micrographic Section of the Syracuse Provincial Laboratory.
 Dr. Leopoldo La Rosa, Chemist of the Department of Hygiene.
 Dr. Mario Marletta, Surgeon.

The undersigned parish priest, Fr. Giuseppe Bruno, hereby declares that he was present during the examination of the liquid mentioned in this report, and that he received from the signatories of same a solemn oath taken on the Gospels, the said signatories having signed this document in his presence. (Sgnd.) Giuseppe Bruno."

From the moment when the tears first started to trickle down Our Lady's cheeks, graces and favors began to be granted to many who asked for them. Many prodigies took place in other countries, far from Syracuse, when people touched pieces of cotton-batting that had not even been used to wipe the Virgin's tears away, but had merely been brushed over the dry face of the image. A typical example is that of young Benita Juarez, a pupil at the Santa Maria School for the Blind, run by the Theresian Sisters at Villalba, Spain. Benita recovered her sight when her eyes touched a scrap of cotton sent from Syracuse. Mariano Sastre, aged eighteen, who lives in the suburbs of Madrid, was cured instantly of the paralysis that had crippled him since boyhood. Many are the cases of this type to prove the authenticity of this prodigy which has been granted Church approval.

The Virgin of Syracuse with her silent weeping was a resumption of the messages of La Salette, Lourdes and Fatima, as the Mother of God grows increasingly sorrowful at human conduct, and fearful of not being able to restrain much longer her Son's justice, which demands a punishment as an example. As Senator Luigi Sturzo says, "Perhaps that is why Our Blessed Mother weeps; She does so because men put themselves in the hands of the powers of destruction instead of construction; they prefer hatred to love, envy to concord, pride of race, caste or class to brotherhood and international cooperation. The Virgin weeps because the world does not pray; and the world does not know how to pray because it is rotten with pride and does not bow its head to God or invoke the Holy Spirit. The world believes and trusts in men; it does not believe, and consequently does not trust, in God."

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Now the question mark:

17.—From this brief review of Our Lady's main apparitions, we can pick out a series of circumstances that are common to them all. The same circumstances are also in evidence at San Sebastian de Garabandal, and it is this that leads us to conclude that the happenings at the little upland village may quite well take their place some day as a continuation of the logical, natural evolution of the Marian apparitions.

The matter has attracted the attention of prestigious devout associations, of authors, of specialists mainly from abroad, all of whom have followed the story of Garabandal closely and have publicized the principal events in circulars, newspaper articles and leaflets.

In Spain itself, the matter has not received the publicity it deserves, doubtless as a result of the notes published by the bishop of Santander on August 26th and October 24th, 1961. These notes stated that, *for the moment* there was no positive proof of the supernatural origin of the occurrences, and forbade priests to go to the village without the bishop's express permission, recommending the public to refrain from taking active part in a series of events on which clarification was still pending.

However, the altitude of justified prudence on the Church's part, adopted by the bishop of Santander—an attitude which is altogether praiseworthy—is, I think, compatible with an objective and truthful exposition of the facts in the manner of a mere report. And, I feel this is particularly true when a book has been published containing grave distortions of these facts.

As a certain leaflet printed in French so rightly says, "if, in recent days, the Mother of God has appeared five times in France, Portugal, Belgium and Italy, what is there to prevent her paying one of her merciful visits to Spain . . . ?" After all, Spain is a country of proven Christian mettle and Marian devotion.

What does stand out after a study of the question is that neither at Fatima, nor at Lourdes, Syracuse, Paris, Banneux, Pontmain, or anywhere else, for that matter, has the assumed Vision had such a wealth of spectacular attendant phenomena. In no previous case have the apparitions been so frequent or lasted so long. It is almost as if all the prodigies in the history of mysticism had made a rendezvous

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at Garabandal. Continual raptures, supernatural locutions, ecstatic falls and walks, cases of levitation, Holy Communion administered by an Angel—the Holy Eucharist being visible in one case when the miracle was duly announced in advance by the visionary—colloquies, etc. And, to cap it all, the announcement of a future

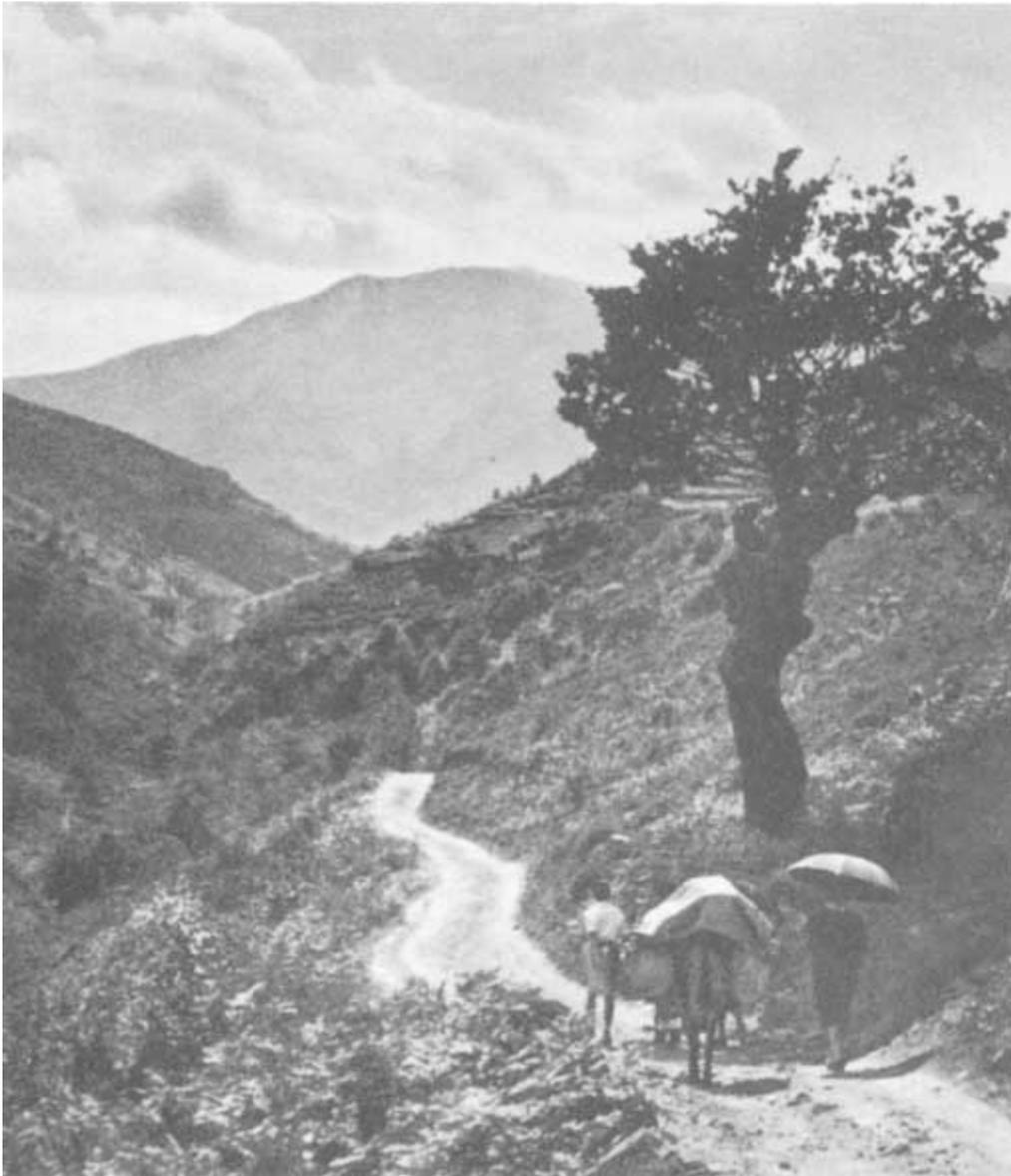
public miracle, together with some details of the circumstances in which it will take place . . . For the Garabandal story is far from ended . . .

What IS Happening at Garabandal?



Map of Spain, showing the location of Garabandal.

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The long climb to Garabandal.

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THE STORY BEGINS



Panoramic view of the village of Garabandal

18.—San Sebastian de Garabandal is a little village of barely seventy homes, nestling on a mountainside. To get there, you have to make a stiff climb along a spur starting at Cosio, where the road, as such, ends. It lies in the province of Santander, some fifty-five miles from the city of Santander itself. The houses are quaint, and the lanes picturesque, though surfaced in rough stone and more often than not deep in mud. San Sebastian de Garabandal is hidden in the heart of the Cantabrian Mountains, at a height of about two thousand feet. The atmosphere is tranquil with its deep silence and undisturbed peace.

Here, isolated from the outside world, live four young girls of humble birth. Their names are Mary Loly, Conchita, Jacinta and Mary Cruz. Mary Loly's surname is Mazon. The other three are all surnamed Gonzalez, although there is no close relationship between them. On June 18th, 1961, Mary Cruz was at the time eleven years old, while the other three were twelve.

It was a Sunday. The parish priest from Cosio, Fr. Valentin Marichalar, had plodded up to San Sebastian to celebrate Mass, as was his custom on Sundays and holidays. After Mass, the villagers usually gathered in the little village square. The children used to go

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there to play. Like the conversation of the adults, the games played by the little girls had about them the spontaneous simplicity so common in a hamlet like Garabandal, where there is seldom much to discuss. At Garabandal, there are no cafés, bars or entertainment. *"Nothing worth mentioning ever happened"* at Garabandal. Adult talk was of cattle, the state of the pastures, and whether or not it would rain.

But, that afternoon of the 18th of June, Conchita whispered a suggestion for a daring escapade in Mary Cruz's ear. For fun, she proposed that they should slip out of the square, jump over a certain stone wall and scrounge some apples. The apple tree in question stood in a small vegetable patch adjoining the schoolmaster's house. A low wall separated the small plot from the lane leading uphill to the pine grove

overlooking the village. They edged their way round the corner, making sure nobody was looking, and made for the object of their prank, the apple tree. But, Mary Loly, Jacinta and another younger child had spotted them both slipping away, and had stealthily followed not far behind. Conchita and Mary Cruz were busily picking apples when the others suddenly appeared on the scene.



Loly
age 12

Jacinta
age 12

Maria-Cruz
age 11

Conchita (1961)
age 12

"Conchita, you're stealing apples," Jacinta shouted.

"Hush! Be quiet," hissed Conchita. "If the teacher hears you, she'll tell Mommy."

Frightened lest someone should come to see what was going on, she crouched low and hid in the undergrowth. Mary Cruz, for her part, was in full flight across the fields.

"Don't run away, Mary Cruz," cried Mary Loly. "We've seen you and we're going to tell the owner."

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Mary Cruz stopped running and woefully retraced her steps to join her friends. Conchita emerged from her hiding-place. A voice summoned the little girl who had accompanied Jacinta and Mary Loly, and the four older girls were at last alone. For a few moments, they did not know what to do. But, eventually, as Conchita recounts in her diary, "thinking better of it, all four of us went back to picking apples."

They were engrossed in their innocent mischief when they suddenly heard the schoolmaster speaking to his wife. "Go and take a look out in the vegetable patch, and scare away the bees. They're at the apple tree again."

Hearing this, the four girls burst into fits of giggles and, their pockets stuffed with fruit, they scrambled over the wall. They had enjoyed themselves. Panting, they reached the lane and began to munch their booty in peace. Thunder rolled through the mountains.

It was half-past eight in the evening

"Did you hear that?"

"Yes, thunder. It's going to rain."

After satisfying their appetites, they began to feel the first pangs of remorse.

"What we've done isn't right," said one.

"Our guardian angels must be very sad," commented another.

"And the devil must be very pleased," added a third.

It was more or less in these terms that they interpreted what they had heard the parish priest say in catechism class. To repair the harm they had done, Conchita had another idea.

"Let's throw stones at the wicked angel, so as to console the good angel," said she. And picking up some stones from the lane, they began to cast them "to the left, with all our might," says Conchita, "at a spot where we said the devil was."

Having thus set their uneasy consciences at rest and shown their repentance, they sat down in the lane to play marbles with some



They sat down in the lane to play marbles.

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pebbles. There the four of them were sitting, in the positions seen in the photograph taken shortly afterwards, when, all at once, Conchita saw "a very beautiful figure appear, surrounded by a great light that did not dazzle my eyes." * When her three companions saw her transfigured, they imagined that she had had an attack, and they were about to shout for help. But, her hands clasped together, Conchita pointed to the apparition.

"Look! Over there!"

Mary Loly had already risen to her feet to fetch help, but now they looked in the direction which Conchita was indicating.

"The angel . . . !" they all gasped. A short silence ensued as the overawed children contemplated the vision before them. They did not say a word. Nor did the angel. Then, he vanished into thin air ...



Interior of the Church at Garabandal

Very frightened by what they had just seen, they ran to the church. On the way, they passed through the little square where some of the villagers were dancing to the strains of a bagpipe and drum. Here, they ran into a little girl called Pili Gonzalez.

"How pale and scared you all look," Pili remarked. "Where have you been?"

"Stealing apples," they answered, ashamed at having to admit the truth.

"Oh, is that all?" the other rejoined disdainfully.

"We've seen an angel," they chorused.

"D'you really mean it?"

"Yes, yes . . . ," they insisted, and hurried off to the church. Meanwhile, the surprised Pili told everybody in the square what she had just heard.

* Quoted from Conchita's diary.

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The Church, seen from the outside.

On arriving at the church, they did not dare enter. The four made their way round to the rear of the building, where they huddled in a corner and started to cry. Some other smaller children were playing nearby and soon discovered them.

"Why are you all crying," they inquired.

" 'Cos we've seen an angel."

The little newcomers ran off to tell the schoolmistress. The four girls felt better for their quiet weeping. Returning to the front of the building, they entered the church. It was not long before the schoolmistress appeared, wearing a look of anxiety and not a little surprised.

"Is it really true that you've seen an angel?"

"Yes, *Señora*"

"It can't have been your imagination, can it?"

"No. We're quite positive we saw him."

"What did he look like?"

"He was wearing a long, seamless blue robe. He had fairly big pink wings. His face was small; it wasn't long and it wasn't round either. His eyes were black. He had fine hands and short finger-nails. His feet weren't in sight. He looked about nine years old. But, although he was a child to look at, he gave the impression of being very strong . . ."

The details gradually came out, one by one. All the girls' replies agreed. The schoolmistress, who had a high opinion of the children, did not doubt their sincerity for a moment.

"In thanksgiving," she said, "let's say a decade of the rosary to the Blessed Sacrament."

This concluded, they made their way home, each filled with a sweet sensation between fear and joy. It

was nine o'clock.

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Señora Gonzalez, who doted on her daughter, greeted Conchita with ill-humour.

"A fine time of night to be coming home! Haven't I told you many a time, you're to be back before dark?"

Still spellbound by her recollection of that glowing figure, and disconcerted by her mother's reproaches for arriving so late, Conchita did not dare enter the ground-floor kitchen where the household spent much of the time. She leant awkwardly against the passage wall near the outer door.

"You see, Mother," she began, "we saw an angel today."

"So!" retorted Señora Gonzalez indignantly. "On top of coming home late, you're going to tell me a lot of nonsense."

"No, Mother, honestly. We did see an angel."

Such insistence left Aniceta Gonzalez nonplussed. She knew that her daughter was customarily truthful. Tentatively at first, Conchita started to tell her mother what had occurred. She ventured some more details. Senora Gonzalez was at a loss, but decided that silence was the best policy.

"Go on up to bed. We'll discuss it in the morning." It was a quarter past nine.



Conchita's house.

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The First Trials

19.—Next day, Monday June 19th, the news had spread round the village like wildfire.

"What would an angel want to come to San Sebastian for?"

"I expect they were suffering from hallucinations. But, they must have seen something, because they looked really frightened."

"I noticed they looked rather pale and seemed to be trembling."

"They sat there crying for quite a while."

"Their descriptions matched when they gave details of the figure they saw."

"They say he had wings."

"It must have been one of those big birds."

"More likely some little child. It was almost dark."

The whole village was agog with the news. The questions rained thick and fast. The little girls answered one villager after another without hesitation. They gave a more detailed description of the angel's appearance and the strange glow that enveloped him.

Amid more or less mocking questions and remarks, they went to school. It was ten o'clock. Before starting the morning's classes, the schoolmistress asked them the same question as the night before.

"Children, are you sure of what you said yesterday?"

"*Si, Señora*. Yes, we are." And they told their story, to the admiration of their schoolmates, who plied them with eager questions. Classes began. "We did everything just as usual," writes Conchita in her diary, "without worrying any more about it."

At one o'clock, classes ended and they went home. Jacinta and Mary Cruz were walking along together when they were overtaken by the parish priest from Cosio.

"What's all this I hear? Did you really see the angel?"

"Yes, Father."

"I'm not too sure, myself . . . Perhaps your eyes played tricks on you."

"Honestly, we weren't mistaken," they answered, smiling. "We saw the angel."

They proceeded on their way. Fr. Valentin turned his steps towards Conchita's house. Halfway there, he met the child. Conchita recalls that the priest looked agitated.

"Come now," he said. "Tell me the whole truth. What did you see last night?"

Conchita told him the story, taking care not to omit any details. Don Valentin listened attentively.

"Well," he instructed her as they parted, "if you see him again this evening, ask him who he is and what he is after."

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Fr. Marichalar now made for Mary Loly's house to complete his inquiries. He was astonished to discover that her replies were identical.

"We'll wait a day or so," the priest puckered his brow, "to see if this beautiful person returns, and see what he has to say. Then, I'll go in to Santander and have a word with the Bishop."

The girls had their lunch and returned to their afternoon lessons. Afterwards, Conchita went to buy some milk. The woman who sold it to her, a friend of Señora Gonzalez, questioned her afresh. Conchita relates that, after hearing her out, the woman smiled kindly.

"Since I know you well," she commented, "I believe you saw the angel. But not the others."

"That isn't so. We were together, all four of us, and we all saw him quite plainly."

She carried the milk home and asked her mother's permission to go to the sunken lane to pray. The house was undergoing repairs. Pepe Diez and Conchita's brother, Aniceto Gonzalez, were working there. Pepe smiled when he heard her request.

"Let her go," he said to her mother. "She can't do anyone any harm by praying!"

"Not on your life, Mother," Aniceto broke in. "Do you want us all to be a laughing stock?"

They were in the midst of this when the other three girls came round the corner. Aniceta was in a quandary. She wanted to let Conchita have her way, but she would have liked to have heeded Aniceto's sensible advice, too.

"Oh Lord!" she exclaimed. "What a fix they've got us into!"

"It isn't a fix, Mother," Conchita put in.

"And what if it's all true? !" Aniceta mused.

She finally gave her consent, and the four set off happily for the lane leading to the pine grove and the spot called the "*calleja*" or sunken lane; their own "little piece of heaven," as it is called in the diary.

"Where are you off to?" people inquired as they passed by.

"To pray in the lane."

"What on earth are you going to the lane for? Haven't you got a perfectly good church to pray in?"

"Yesterday, we saw the angel there, so now we're going to pray and see if he appears there again." Followed by the neighbors' smiles and jokes, the girls went on. When they reached the spot where they had been the night before, they knelt down. Passers-by in the lane and some little boys and girls who had followed them laughed heartily. They attempted to force the girls to leave the lane.

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A group of youngsters decided to use a more persuasive argument. Crouching hidden among the maize-stalks in a field above the sunken lane, they started to throw stones. Jacinta, Mary Loly, Conchita and Mary Cruz protested, and begged to be left in peace to say the rosary.

The sky was overcast, and a strong wind was blowing. Perhaps the behavior of the rascals in the maize field was the reason why there was no apparition that afternoon. A place that is in the process of being stoned is hardly the most auspicious spot for the enormous grace of a heavenly vision.

Night fell. Accompanied by the jeers of everyone about them, they went to the church to say a decade to the Blessed Sacrament. The schoolmistress met them on the way.

"Have you been up the lane?"

"Yes, we have. But we didn't see anything."

"Don't worry," the teacher reassured them. The children's disappointment at that moment only convinced

her the more of the vision of the previous night. "Don't worry, He'll come tomorrow."

"Why didn't he come today?" they asked.

"Most likely because it has been clouded over."

It was a quarter past six when they entered the church. Afterwards they went home.

"Well? Did you see the angel?" their families asked.

"No, we didn't see anyone today."

They settled down to do their homework, had supper and went to bed. "It must have been a quarter to ten," Conchita recalls, "when I started to say my prayers. And then, we each heard a voice that said: 'Do not worry. You will see me again!'"

The phenomenon happened to all four girls at the same time, each in her respective home. Frightened at this strange occurrence, "we went on fervently saying our prayers until we fell asleep." *

* From Conchita's diary.

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**The site of many apparitions:
the Sunken Lane leading to the Pines (top).**

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The Visions' Light

20.—The locution is another common phenomenon in the annals of the mystics. In the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin, it generally occurs when the visions come to an end, as a means of continuing the contact between the Virgin and her visionaries. As we saw in the previous chapter, the Vision said to Sister Catherine Labouré: "You will not see me again, but you will hear my voice in your prayers." This has been particularly frequent in the case of Lucy of Fatima. We shall see in due course how, at Garabandal, these locutions came

to replace the direct colloquies with the Vision. The "llamadas" or calls, which we shall also deal with, described by the visionaries as a sort of unspoken inner summons, likewise fall within this category of mystical phenomena.

On the 20th, in their kitchen, Conchita again had difficulty in obtaining her mother's permission to return to the lane. She was still trying to persuade her to change her mind when the other three arrived.

"You three go," Conchita's mother was firm. "Conchita is staying home." Reluctantly they departed, but they dawdled just round the corner. Conchita was crestfallen. Going to the door, Señora Gonzalez hailed Mary Loly.

"Come here, the three of you. Now, listen. If you do as I tell you, I'll let Conchita go with you."

Overjoyed at this, they agreed. Aniceta had a plan. She had devised a neat ruse so that her daughter could go, but at the same time be saved from ridicule.

"You go on ahead as if you were going to play, without breathing a word to a soul. When you reach the lane, Conchita will creep round to join you, across the fields."

They were none too sure that Aniceta would keep her word. They looked dubious as they left.

"You run on ahead," Conchita reassured them, "I'll be right behind you."

Outside the village, Conchita caught up with them. Happy and excited, the four companions came to their usual spot and knelt down to pray. They finished saying the rosary, and still the angel did not appear.

"We were just getting to our feet to start back to the village," says Conchita, "when we saw a shining light blocking the path." Blinded by the light, the startled children were disconcerted and afraid. Conchita records in her diary that they "gave a scream of horror". But the light soon dimmed. They recovered their vision of all about them, and set off down the lane towards the village

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church. The angel was preparing the girls for their heavenly visions. This is why, first of all, they saw his figure and, later, the bright light that accompanied the visions. So it was to go on until he had prepared them to enter and leave with amazing frequency that gorgeous stage where celestial beings appeared, spoke and moved.

They began to feel themselves more a part of heaven than of earth. At first, they did not tell anyone about their experience of that day. Realizing that others would not understand, they were silent and kept these wonders to themselves. But, next day, they remembered the parish priest's admonishment. "If you see anything again, don't fail to let me know at once."

They had to tell Fr. Valentin Marichalar about the light, but their parents would not allow them to descend the mountain to Cosio. In the end, they saw that there was no other alternative but to tell their parents

everything, so that the latter could speak to the priest. Their parents did as they asked. The news spread. "But, now," says Conchita, "people were beginning to believe a little."

The Angel Returns

21.—It was the 21st of June. The children felt they had their families' blessings. That afternoon, Aniceta needed no persuading to let her daughter go. Something, however, told the four that they should not go alone. They asked a neighbor, Señora Clementina Gonzalez, to accompany them. At first, Clementina did not dare accept the invitation. Besides, she did not believe any of their tales. She called on a friend and asked her advice. How about them both going along? The women decided that no harm could come of it if there were two of them. They would accompany the children just to satisfy their feminine curiosity. Clementina Gonzalez and her friend Concesa joined the little group of girls. As they proceeded up the path, they passed several neighbors. Seeing the children accompanied by two adults, the neighbors did not hesitate to join the party, too.

So it happened that several villagers were there to say the rosary that afternoon of June 21st. One of the girls led the mysteries, while the rest gave the responses. They said the five decades, but nothing happened. The first smothered laughter was heard, the first wisecracks.

"Let's say another decade, and see if that way ..."

They said another decade amid a certain amount of sniggering. Then, as they ended the decade, all at once the extraordinary thing happened. As one, the four girls seemed suddenly to be frozen to the spot. Kneeling there, they wore a sweet expression on their

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pale faces, which seemed to reflect a strange light. All four were looking in the same direction, absorbed. Their heads were thrown back at a surprising angle. Their unblinking eyes were staring up at the heavens. One smiled. Another posed the question that the parish priest had instructed them to ask.

"Who are you? Why have you come?" But the angel did not answer. The laughter and chuckles had ceased. The onlookers were gripped by a sudden fear of the supernatural. Her nerves on edge, Clementina started to cry.

"It's true, it's true. An angel really has appeared to these little ones."

As suddenly as they entered their rapture, the four emerged from it, quite normal and smiling. They looked very happy. The heavenly visit left them an aftermath of inner sweetness. People gathered round, hugging and kissing them. The news was around the village in no time. Knots of people formed to discuss it. The strangest theories were ventured as to the cause of the prodigy.

"If you don't believe this, it's because you don't believe in God," said the most enthusiastic villagers.

The children were continually beset with questions. "People were overcome," Conchita describes the scene, "because they had never seen or heard the likes of it before."

But, what would an angel want to descend from heaven to Garabandal for?

Divine Sleep

22.—The parish priest at Cosio heard all about the happenings of the previous evening from several sources. He was impatient to report to his superiors. Some prudent souls, however, advised him to wait until the following day, since he would then be able to see for himself and give the bishop a first-hand account.

He accepted this sound advice and, that evening, at a quarter past eight, he was on hand with a group of neighbors. Together, they said the rosary and, the very instant they finished, the girls went into a state of ecstasy. Among the onlookers was a teacher called Manin . . . * Throughout the rapture, the visionaries were impervious to pain, pin-pricks and burns. It was as if they were deep in a divine slumber; they were unaware of anything that occurred about them. They entered a field of vision placed above the natural plane, a state that isolated them from the things of this world. When they were in an ecstasy, they could see each other.

* The first suspicions of possible hypnotic influence fell upon this teacher. He was consequently obliged to leave the scene of the apparitions.

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**L. to R.: Loly, Conchita, Jacinta, and Maria-Cruz
in ecstasy photographed in July 1961**

But, if one of them lost her state of ecstasy, she disappeared from the field of vision of the others, as though the rapture were a stage and one of the visionaries had gone off into the wings. Their insensitivity to pain

seems to have been complete. Tests were made, such as pricking them hard, but they brought no reaction whatsoever. When they suddenly fell to their knees, they crashed to the ground with tremendous force, but showed not the slightest sign of pain. One totally reliable eye-witness was deeply impressed on one occasion, when Mary Loly fell and hit her head on the edge of a step. The step in question was made of cement. The noise of the jarring blow was spine-chilling. "The bystanders", says the eyewitness, "smothered a scream of horror, but the child remained calmly sitting on the floor, smiling and chatting happily with the Virgin. When she came out of her rapture, they asked whether she had felt the blow. She could recall nothing. She said that it had perhaps been the cause of a sensation which she noticed at one point, like painless pins and needles, all over. On examination, however, her head was seen to have a large bump where it had struck the step."

In other words, when the visionary was in a state of total ecstasy, she was absolutely impervious to pain.

"The most painful pin-pricks, the roughest shaking, even burns and so on, are quite incapable of arousing them from their rapture. Their eyes often move, but only in order to follow the divine vision with a vivacity that seems to enlarge them considerably. They do not perceive any material contact at all, as can be ascertained by

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quickly passing a light or some other object close in front of their eyes; this does not cause the slightest flicker of their eyelids or pupils." *

A film was taken of the visionaries of Garabandal, with the help of powerful spotlights. In a state of ecstasy, the girls came into the blinding light without so much as blinking. When the vision ended and they recovered their normal state, they immediately shut their eyes. Dazzled, they protested at the glare of the lights trained on them. Their reaction can be seen quite clearly in the film.



Loly, Conchita, Jacinta and Maria-Cruz in ecstasy, July 1961.

The light enveloping the visions was very strong. But, unlike ordinary light, it did not hurt the eyes. This explains the reaction of the visionaries to spotlights. On the other hand, when the ecstasy took place at night, in the pine-grove or in the streets where there were no lights, when the girls came to, they were astonished to discover that it was dark. The light enveloping the visions had been as bright as daylight.

When they left on June 22nd, the parish priest and his companions were convinced that the children's ecstatic trances were genuine. It was quite impossible for ignorant little girls eleven and twelve years of age to make such a pretense. The phenomena were beyond any natural explanation. Garabandal had an inexplicable prodigy on its hands. They did not know whether the causes were supernatural or preternatural. But those four children certainly saw and

* Taken from a complete report drawn up by Fr. Ramon Andreu, on orders from his superiors.

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spoke to someone. And, to have this vision and dialogue, they underwent a physical change that snatched them from this world and anaesthetized their bodies to natural stimuli of any kind.

From June 23rd to July 1st

23.—On the 23rd, a larger number of spectators accompanied the girls when they went to the lane as usual. The news had spread to the surrounding hamlets. Promptly, at a quarter to nine, the angel appeared. The onlookers watched the scene, their mouths agape. Afterwards, they crowded round to kiss the little girls and ply them with messages to communicate to Heaven. The Civil Guards, the Spanish country police, escorted them to the sacristy where the parish priest wanted to interrogate them. Eventually, Fr. Marichalar emerged from the sacristy. "I have questioned them together and singly," he proclaimed to those waiting at the church door. "All four coincide in their statements. These children undoubtedly see something that is not of this world. It might well be God's work ..."

The crowd dispersed, satisfied at these first impressions.

The following day, June 24th, was a Saturday. From the early afternoon onwards, people began to arrive from distant villages where the news had spread. On the scene of the apparitions, a small barrier had been erected to protect the children from the avalanche of eager spectators. The expectation knew no bounds. "That day," says Conchita, "the Vision did not give us time to start the rosary."

No sooner had they reached the spot than the light appeared, and in its midst stood the angel. Beneath him were some letters and Roman numerals. They asked him the meaning of these, but the angel smiled without saying anything.

When the rapture ended, they were taken in a cart to the church. There, they went into the sacristy one by one to tell Fr. Marichalar what they had seen. But they had not taken sufficient notice of the writing, and none of them could give the priest the explanation he desired.

Next day, Sunday, the crowd was larger than ever. Among the spectators were five priests and several doctors. One doctor took hold of Conchita and lifted her up in the air. But, that strange extra weight that often overcame the girls when in ecstasy caused him to drop her to the ground from a considerable height. A loud crunch was heard as her rigid knees smashed to the stony ground. Conchita's eldest brother, Serafin, attempted to break her fall, but was unable to. He asserts that an inner force checked him.

Afterwards, several spectators drew near to examine the girls' legs. They bore the marks of the pin-pricks, blows, scratches and

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other signs. In the course of the trance, however, as Conchita herself states, they did not hurt them at all. "They only left marks." *

There was no apparition on Monday 26th. The following Tuesday and Wednesday, the visions of the angel were repeated. On the Thursday and Friday, there were no visions either. The total absence of prodigies disheartened many people who had made the climb to Garabandal in the hope of seeing something briefly while they were there.

On Saturday July 1st, there was a great gathering, including many doctors, priests and people from every walk of life. The apparition occurred very early, at half-past seven in the evening. It was still daylight. The vision lasted two hours, which seemed a mere two minutes to the visionaries. The angel spoke. He told them that, next day, Sunday, the Blessed Virgin would come. As at Fatima, visionaries were prepared for their heavenly visitor by the presence of an angel. In Portugal, he said he was the Angel of Peace. At Garabandal, he was St. Michael the Archangel.

The girls asked him the meaning of the writing and the Roman numerals. He told them that the Blessed Virgin would explain it to them. She would appear under the name of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. . .

Conchita recalls that he spoke to them of many things that day. Some of the children's questions made him smile. He departed assuring them that he would return next day to accompany the Virgin.

People from all parts flocked to the village. Expectation had reached a climax.

What would the morrow bring?



Loly, Conchita and Jacinta in ecstasy.

* Quoted from Conchita's diary.

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Our Lady of Mount Carmel: 900 years before Christ, the Prophet Elias retired to Mount Carmel (the name means "a Garden") to seek God in solitude. His example was followed by many hermits and thus a religious order originated. After Christianity was brought to the holy men of Mt. Carmel by the Apostles, they preached devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, adopting the name of Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. During the Crusades they fled the Saracens and established themselves precariously in Europe. There in 1251, St. Simon Stock praying for the survival of his community in England had a vision of Our Lady giving him a Scapular (her mantle), as the symbol of her protection.—Ed.

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24.—Mass on Sunday, July 2nd, was celebrated with great solemnity. The rosary was said in the little church at three o'clock in the afternoon. Afterwards, the girls took the trail path down to Cosio to meet Conchita's brothers who had been away. Halfway to Cosio, they were obliged to turn back. The crowds trudging their way up to San Sebastian de Garabandal recognized the children from photographs and would not allow them to proceed. Some brought them rosaries; others gave them candy; some had come to take souvenir pictures. But, most had come to bombard them with not always discreet questions. A youth from San Sebastian de Garabandal was already riding down on horseback to search for them, when they were offered a ride by the driver of a Landrover that happened to be passing.

On arrival, they found the few streets jammed with strangers. Among them were eleven priests and several doctors. Just before six o'clock, with the multitude behind them, they set off for the "*cuadro*," the rude stone enclosure erected on the spot where the angel had appeared in order to prevent the children being crushed by the crowds. They had not reached the spot when; all at once, they found themselves in the presence of the Blessed Virgin. She was accompanied by two angels. One was a stranger; the other was St. Michael. Both wore the same garb. Conchita declares that they were very alike, "as if they were twins". On the Virgin's right, they could see a square of red fire framing a triangle with an eye and some writing. The lettering was in an odd oriental script. This bright square was taken by some to be a symbol of the concept of God.

The visionaries spoke to the Vision at considerable length. Their conversation was extraordinarily natural. "We told her," says Conchita, "that everyone was behind with the hay-making, and still had the grass piled waiting to be spread to dry. And she laughed at the things we told her." *

* Quoted from Conchita's diary.

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There were two salient points in this conversation. One was the identity of St. Michael the Archangel, which gave rise to a naive remark by one of the children: "I've got a brother called Michael, too, but without the Saint". This brought delighted giggles from her three companions. The second matter was connected with the first revelation of what was later to be the Virgin's message.

All the evidence points to the fact that they received the message in the course of several visions, and not just verbally. In certain respects, they saw it enacted. The sentence: "The Cup is already filling", an expression well-known in Marian terminology, was seen in plastic form. They were shown a large chalice, into which were falling drops of blood or tears. Actually, the children had no idea of the contents of the chalice.

When Our Lady spoke to them of this and of the punishment, she looked very grave. "We have never again seen her looking so sad," says Conchita, "and when pronouncing the words 'The Cup is already filling',

she spoke in a very low voice."

The Virgin taught them to say the rosary slowly. At first, she accompanied them herself, but once they knew it properly, She only joined in the "Glory be to the Father."

It was a moving experience, first to hear the little girls praying normally, which they did rather fast, and afterwards to compare it with the same prayer said in ecstasy. Then, the pronunciation was far slower and had an impressive rhythm. There are several copies of tapes in existence on which people managed to record the visionaries' prayers in ecstasy.

From the first, the children gave an example of the proper attitude that we should adopt towards the Blessed Virgin. Spontaneously natural and trusting, they chatted with her, telling her all about the most elementary features of their rural life; they blew her kisses, and she even permitted them to hold her crown in their hands, When the Virgin took her leave, they were saddened. "Don't go yet awhile; you have only been here a second," they often pleaded.

On a certain occasion, one child turned to another. "You know lots of funny stories. Tell her some so she won't go away," she urged.

The spectators were occasionally disappointed by such simple conversations. The same occurred at Lourdes, where Bernadette at first used to answer Our Lady with a seemingly ridiculous "Oui, Mademoiselle."

When the Virgin departed, "vanished into thin air" as the girls described it, they usually bade her farewell with a little wave of the hand.

The visionaries gave the following description of Our Lady: "She

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Loly, Conchita and Jacinta in ecstasy.

comes wearing a white robe, a blue mantle and a crown of golden stars; her hands are outstretched with a brown scapular, except when she has the Infant Jesus in her arms. Her dark chestnut hair is long and parted in the middle. Her face is rather long, with a very dainty nose. Her mouth is very pretty, with slightly full lips. She looks about seventeen and is tallish." All four girls stress the unmistakable sound of her voice. "There's no other voice like hers."

She told them that she was Our Lady of Mount Carmel. God willing, once the truth of this story is substantiated, she will come to be venerated under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel of Garabandal.

Both the Virgin and the other celestial beings who appeared to the girls were seen full-face. If they moved from one place to another, they usually did so without moving their feet, and facing the visionaries all the time.

The breeze sometimes stirred the Blessed Virgin's hair, which fell in a cascade almost to her waist.

When the Vision disappeared, "we were very sad", says Conchita.

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The "Summons"

25.—The children exuded joy and happiness after seeing their Heavenly Mother. When they rose early next morning, the first idea that entered their four heads was to return to the scene of the apparition to give thanks for the favor granted them that memorable day. Afterwards, they wended their way home, prepared to obey their respective parents in every way. From that day onwards, they set out to practice Our Lady's instructions as to their conduct in this world.

At school, the teacher, Doña Serafina Gómez, received them with tears in her eyes, smothering them in kisses. She did not tire of exclaiming how lucky they were to have been chosen by God for so exceptional a favor.

As the customary hour of the apparitions approached, the children showed signs of impatience and excitement.

"It's time," their parents pointed out. "Why don't you run along and pray in the lane?"

"She hasn't called us yet," answered the children.

It was the first time that the little girls mentioned what they describe as the "*llamada*" or summons. This is an inner voice which they perceive quite distinctly; a kind of wordless warning that does not come through the ears, but is quite unmistakably heard. A considerable time elapses between the first summons and the second, while the third follows close on the heels of its predecessor.

An investigator of events at Garabandal noted down Jacinta's impressions.

"When the Virgin calls you, does she say 'Jacinta'?"

"The first time," she explained, "she just says 'Jacinta'; the second, 'Jacinta, come!'; and the third time, 'Jacinta, hurry, hurry, hurry . . .' But all this is inside me and without actual words



Conchita has received one call, but it is late and she has fallen asleep waiting for the next call.

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Attempting to give a more graphic description, one child said that, with the summonses, they noticed a refreshing sensation of sorts: "Something like eating a peppermint, but different."

"The inward voice makes you feel very happy," said another. "And, when the third summons comes, you get very fidgety."

Hearing about the summonses, the parish priest arranged to have the little girls separated, leaving Mary Loly and Jacinta at Mary Loly's house, while Mary Cruz and Conchita remained at the latter's. The children indicated when they felt the first call and, later, the second. The instant they received the third summons, the two at Mary Loly's home and the other pair at Conchita's all dashed out at the same time and reached the lane together. There, the Blessed Virgin was waiting for them, bearing the Infant Jesus in her arms.

This time, the Vision had come without the angels. The Virgin and the Infant Jesus were smiling. When asked where St. Michael was, Our Lady's smile broadened.

The Infant Jesus was very little. He looked barely a year old. He did not utter a word, but He was laughing. On occasions, the Virgin allowed the children to hold Him. Then, the spectators observed how they held Him, adopting all the natural postures for cradling a baby. The children said afterwards that He was weightless, but that their hands met an obstruction when they touched Him.

"Come with me," said Mary Cruz to the Infant Jesus, "and I'll give you some candies."

"He didn't say anything, but she talked to us a lot," Conchita commented.

The apparition commenced at half-past seven and ended at eight o'clock.

"God shall be with you, and so shall I," said the Vision. "You will see me again tomorrow."

Owing to the frequency of the visions from then onwards, it is not easy to establish a definite chronological order, or to detail the main features of each occasion. Therefore, except in the case of particular visions where the dialogue was recorded, either on a tape recorder or in shorthand, we shall be obliged only to mention the outstanding points as reported by several eyewitnesses, but without stating exactly in which vision they occurred.

Early in July, people noticed the children picking up little pebbles from the ground and raising them on high for the Vision to kiss. At the moment of offering these stones to be kissed, they dedicated them to particular people. "This one for Andrew . . . This one for Millie . . ." and so on.

It was not long before the pebbles were replaced by pious objects such as rosaries, medals, etc. Wedding rings were very frequently

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Loly in ecstasy offering the Vision a holy picture to be kissed. Behind her is her father.

offered to be kissed, too. This explains the photographs where the children are seen with thick ropes of rosaries round their necks and their fingers covered in wedding rings.

Curiously enough, if an object was offered to be kissed a second time, when the little visionaries held it up to the Vision, they exclaimed: "Oh, has this one already been kissed?" And on returning it to its owner, they often declared; "The Virgin says this one's already been done."

In their trances, the children's faces underwent a complete change, turning radiant and softly beautiful. This can be observed in the photographs.



Loly in ecstasy gives the Vision some rosaries to be kissed.

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Conchita in ecstasy.

The Frequency and Duration of the Visions

26.—Although the visions were not continual for the first two weeks, thenceforth they became more and more frequent. There were often several in a single day. The hour at which the apparitions took place also varied greatly; they occurred early in the morning, at noon, after lunch, etc. The commonest time was from seven to nine in the evening. Later on, they occurred at night, ending as late as five o'clock in the morning on a number of occasions.

Their duration was equally variable. They lasted from two to five minutes in the case of an instantaneous communication, for example: "The Virgin will not be coming today, because there is a group of people who are dancing." Or, "I shall see you again at such-and-such an hour." As a rule, however, the rapture lasted about half an hour, and often enough continued for as long as two hours. Once, Mary Loly remained in ecstasy from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., with one or two brief intervals.

This is not new in the history of the mystics. St. Teresa writes: "Although it sometimes lasts a long while, on occasions it suddenly ceases, as if the Lord wishes to show that it is not a thing that can be procured by any human means." *

* St. Teresa of Avila, "Moradas; sextas 2-4".

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During the apparitions, time stands still for the visionary. This explains why the girls pleaded: "Oh, but you have only been here a second." They were surprised to hear from the Vision how long the apparition had in fact been in progress. The duration was always confirmed subsequently by the onlookers, a fact that further

substantiated the reality of the visions.

It is significant that, in spite of the long periods spent kneeling on the jagged stones in the lane, their heads craned back at an incredible angle, the visionaries never showed signs of the slightest weariness. In summer they were oblivious to the heat and never perspired, despite the breakneck speed of their ecstatic walks. After a rapture, the girls proved to be in a perfectly normal state, relaxed and rested.

The first few visions were of the angel. The same was the case at Fatima. Although some of the visionaries at Garabandal had heard of the apparitions at Fatima, it transpired that none of them knew that these had been heralded by the presence of an angel.

The little girls were restless while waiting for the Virgin, but without experiencing any sensation of fear or uneasiness. It was only at the very beginning, when the shining light prevented them seeing the path, that they felt afraid. But this was immediately followed by an overwhelming peace and joy. To quote the eminent theologian Fr. Royo Marin: "The visions sent by God usually produce great fear at first; but later they leave the soul full of love, humility, tenderness and peace." *



Conchita gives her crucifix to be kissed.

27.—The approximate sequence of the apparitions was as follows: from June 18th to July 1st, the children saw the angel, but only on July 1st did he speak to them. On July 2nd, the Blessed Virgin appeared. During the second half of July, they began to experience ecstatic oscillations, swaying to and fro. About August 2nd or 3rd, the first ecstatic falls occurred. And, on August 5th, there commenced the phenomenon of the ecstatic walks of one kind or another, as we shall see.

* Fr. Royo Marin, "Teología de la Perfección Cristiana." Section No. 591.

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**Conchita at the Pines a few moments before receiving
Holy Communion from the Angel**

28.—On July 27th, there took place an apparition that has been described in detail by an eyewitness.

In the morning, the children had a vision, announcing another one for eight o'clock that evening.

"It's earlier today," the little girls declared.

At the appointed time, an estimated six hundred people were in San Sebastian de Garabandal awaiting events. There were seven priests and a Dominican professor from the Workers' University of Cordoba.

It was nearly eight o'clock when the four reached the lane. Before they could reach the enclosure, they fell to their knees, two in front and two behind, about eighteen inches apart. Conchita had her head craned back in a very awkward posture nearly all the time. The other three looked ahead, their eyes raised on high. Mary Cruz wept. There was a sweet expression on the four little faces. They occasionally smiled and, once or twice, burst out laughing.

At one juncture, they all held up the masses of medals slung round their necks for the Vision to kiss.

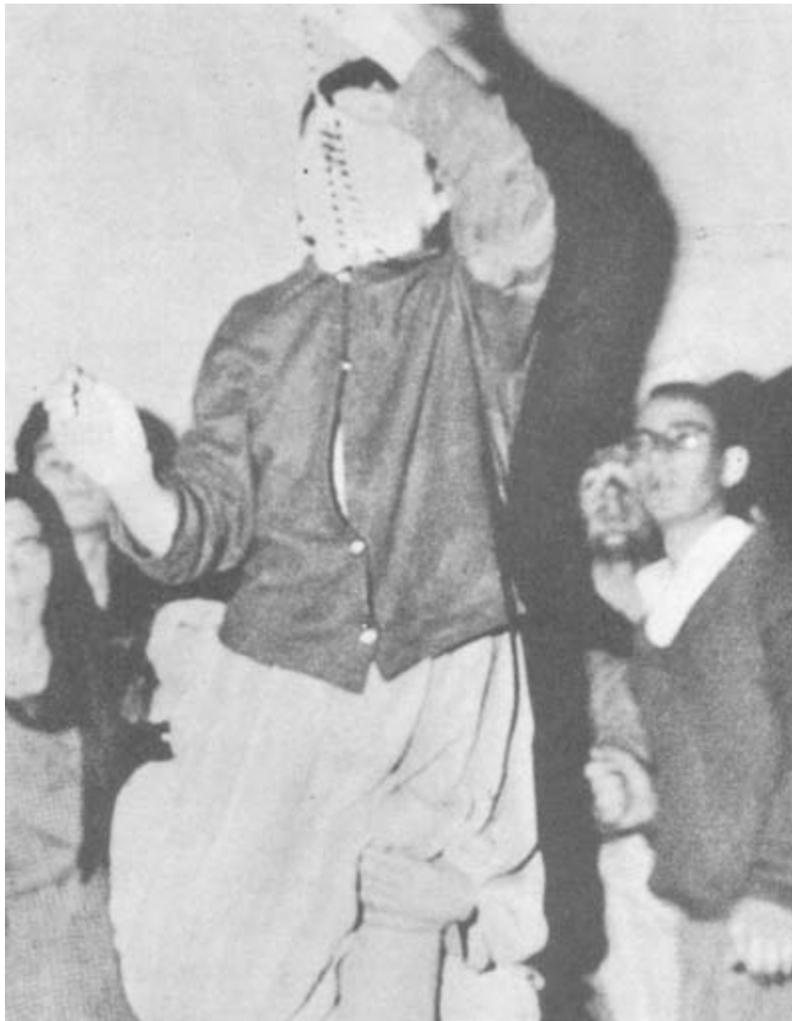
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"This one belongs to a man who told me you were to kiss it very hard for him."

Jacinta started one of those swaying motions that were later to end in ecstatic falls. Still in a trance, Mary Cruz put out her arm to prevent Jacinta losing her balance. There came a moment when Jacinta was half-lying on the ground.

"Cross my arms," Conchita requested Mary Loly. "No, you've crossed them the wrong way."

Only a visionary who was not in a state of ecstasy could take hold of another, in a trance, and move her limbs like a doll's to set them in a certain position. Anyone else encountered a rigidity that was difficult to overcome. They could lift one another up with the greatest of ease. On the other hand, two grown men were barely able to move a single child when in a rapture. In one of the photographs, Conchita can be seen, before the church door, lifting Mary Loly up to give something to the Virgin to be kissed. This is a result of the lack of gravity characteristic of the visionaries, and only they can do this to one another.



Photograph taken inside the Church. Loly easily lifts Jacinta to help her reach up to the Vision, whereas two grown men can hardly move her.

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**Conchita in ecstasy, rising after an ecstatic fall;
only half her body is resting on the ground**

The cases of levitation that have occurred at Garabandal fall within this same group of phenomena.

In the course of this particular vision—according to the eyewitness report mentioned—Mary Cruz spent the whole time kneeling on a sharp wedge of stone some two inches thick, without any sign of pain or discomfort.

When the time came to say goodbye, they blew kisses into the air and opened and shut their hands in that expressive little wave of farewell so common in small children.

But, first, they pleaded with the Vision not to leave so soon. "An hour already . . . ? Noooo! Only a second . . . An hour an a quarter . . . ? Noooo! Just a short while . . . But it must be, if you say so, 'cause you don't tell fibs."

Conchita repeated the Virgin's words. "An hour and twenty-five minutes." Exactly the time the vision had lasted.

Their return to normality was sudden and of one accord, like electric bulbs when the current is switched off. All four lowered their gaze at the same moment. They recovered their customary speaking voices and said, "let's say the rosary."

I say they recovered their normal voices, because the conversations with Our Lady were carried on in a rather husky whisper. There are several copies of recording tapes with some of these conversations.

In the conversation of that particular day, they asked Our Lady why she had not brought the Infant Jesus with her; they talked

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to her about some priests who had come; they told her that the parish priest had given them some plums in the sacristy, and that the pulpit was almost falling apart; they said Fr. Marichalar had scolded Conchita for wearing her long mane of hair loose, "like St. Michael's"; and that Conchita's mother was swarthy and only had two teeth . . .

They also mentioned that a film had been taken of them, and that they themselves had never been to the cinema, although they had passed by one in Torrelavega, "and it was a house . . ."

When they spoke of the priests (always a favorite topic in the children's conversations with the Blessed Virgin), they remarked that one of them was wearing a white habit and "shoes with holes in the top", as they described his sandals. They could not recall his Order; it was too much for them. The Vision told them that he was a Dominican. "Yes, the 'Dominicu'." They were very pleased with themselves at having managed to remember it.

Conchita in Santander

29.—Fearing that Conchita, who seemed the brightest of the four, might be influencing the others, some priests and doctors agreed to have her separated from them. She was taken to stay in Santander. There, a close watch was kept on her. She was also taken to see the Apostolic Administrator.

One day, while they were in a state of ecstasy, Mary Cruz, Mary Loly and Jacinta were informed by the Virgin that, at that very moment, Conchita was in a trance, too. "How lovely! She must be seeing you in Santander," the three exclaimed.

Conchita's ecstasy took place in the street, in front of the church of La Consolacion. She went into a trance at the same time as her friends at Garabandal were speaking to the Virgin.

In her diary, Conchita writes that "the police had to give a hand, because there were lots of people all around . . . When the vision ended, they left me in an office with a priest and a doctor. The priest's name was Don Francisco de Odriozola, and the doctor was Dr. Piñal. They said, how had I done these things; and that I was mad, deceiving people in that way. They also said: 'sit up straight and look at my nose. I am going to hypnotize you.' I laughed, and he said to me: 'Don't laugh; it is not a laughing matter!' And that day they didn't do anything more to me." *

After calling in several doctors to see her, they decided that she should stay on in Santander "to enjoy herself". Accompanied by

* Quoted from Conchita's diary.

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some little girls her own age, they started to apply the new therapy to cure her. This consisted of taking her to the beach and to funfairs. These two forms of entertainment were novel to her. But her heart was in the mountains, with her playmates and fellow visionaries; and with Our Lady, who was always in her thoughts. "As I was taken to the beach every day, the Virgin didn't appear to me."

After a week of this, a friend of her family's intervened and arranged for her to return home. Her mother went to pick her up. "The doctor got very angry and said lots of things to me so that I shouldn't go home. And I told him that I hadn't seen the Virgin, but that I was sure the others had." And she closes the episode in her diary saying: "They were all very good to me really."

When she arrived back at Garabandal, she encountered "several Padres and a lot of people who were on their way to meet me." Mary Loly and Jacinta, who were in a trance in the church, had just announced "that I was coming up the road, as in fact I was." The Virgin had told them. The people had immediately set out to see if it was true, and had met her on her way up from Cosio. At home once more, Conchita told her friends that, while in Santander, she had only had one vision, but that she had spoken to the Virgin once, without seeing her. "She told me that she did not appear to me more because I went to the beach."

Secret Revelations

30.—On July 29th, the little girls had an ecstasy under the close scrutiny of a doctor, who took their pulse and diagnosed their normality. The spectators were all crowding round, causing a lot of noise and making it difficult to hear the visionaries' words, spoken as they were in that husky whisper. The general din was only increased by the collapse of a rough stone wall onto which a number of onlookers had clambered.

A couple of Civil Guards attempted to restore silence. All at once, the trance concluded. They returned to normality.

"The Virgin says that we're to go up to the pines; and that our parents, the priests, the nuns and the Civil Guards can come, too. But they must remain at a distance. And the rest must stay farther away still."

They climbed the hill to the pine-grove. Calmly, the little girls pointed out the positions that everyone should take up. The Civil Guards made as if to keep the crowd back, but, incredible though it may seem, they obeyed the little visionaries' instructions to the letter.

The Vision had told them that the onlookers might watch, but

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not hear. She also indicated that the children should be accompanied by two little girls as witnesses. Their names were Mary Carmen and Sari, about six years old at the time.

It was not the first time that these child witnesses had been used. They had also accompanied the visionaries on a few other occasions, on the orders of the Vision. At one point, it was suggested that one of them should be replaced by a bigger girl aged about twelve, but the Vision had not consented to this.

It was in the course of those visions that Our Lady completed her message and revealed a secret to them. They were not allowed to make the message known until October 18th, 1961. This time, their faces were sad during the trance. One parent remarked: "They're crying." Their conversation could not be heard, but there came a sound of kisses being blown to the Vision.

After some minutes, the parish priest called to Mary Carmen, one of the child witnesses. She slowly came over. Asked what they were talking about, she shrugged indifferently: "They're asking the Virgin not to tell them sad things." The requirements of the public remaining at a distance and Mary Carmen's short explanation served to confirm that Our Blessed Mother was telling them about the punishment that divine justice has prepared for Mankind if we disregard Our Lady's messages and do not mend our ways.

One of them finally rose to her feet and took the Virgin's crown in her arms. The crowd saw her go through the motions of examining it, and lift it onto her head. The crown was passed from hand to hand among the children. The spectators could see that it fitted some heads better than others.

An eyewitness recorded the scene. "They raised their hands as if proffering something. One folded her arms. There was a sound of kisses. They stretched out their arms, smiling; now, they were listening; they started to cry. After eleven minutes they came to. We ran over to them and observed that one still had wet tear-stains on her cheeks. 'Why are you crying?' we asked. But she did not answer." *

"Who did you see?" someone asked Mary Loly.

"We saw Our Lady of Mount Carmel. We held her crown in our hands."

"We were still talking to them," recalls a spectator, "when they had their third vision of the day, and went into a trance again. This time, everything they said was heard quite clearly. The Virgin brought the Infant Jesus. They took His crown. The little girls

* Verbatim testimony from one of the many accounts quoted here only after due verification.

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remarked that it was small. They asked His age. "The Virgin is very pleased because the people obeyed her. She says to say the rosary. She says that if they want they can come and say it here."

They were back to normal. They started the rosary. When they reached the words "The Lord is with Thee", in the fifth Hail Mary of the third decade, they went into a rapture, their voices trailing off on the last word. It was their fourth vision that day, July 29th. This ecstasy lasted about an hour.

"Why have you come?"

"....."

"If the people hadn't obeyed, wouldn't you have come?"

"....."

"So that they'll believe?"

"....."

They proffered something. They blew a kiss.

"Isn't it lovely!"

They were still absorbed, unblinking.

"You're so sweet . . . Tomorrow we'll fast when we come; we won't eat anything at all . . ."

"....."

"Shall I kiss your scapular?"

This referred to the scapular that often hung from the Virgin's arm, near her wrist.

"Some Carmelite Padres came today ..."

"....."

"I'm thinking of the 'Dominicu'."

The memory of this Dominican Father seems to have been deeply engraved on their minds, perhaps on account of his white habit, which they saw for the first time on his visit.

"Show us your robe again. It's white with white flowers on it."

"Isn't it lovely!"

"Let me have your crown! How huge it is!"

"A Civil Guard brought a little girl who can't speak or walk. I promised him . . . Cure her!"

"....."

"Cure something so everyone can see it."

This dialogue is quoted verbatim direct from the notes jotted down in the course of the ecstasy by a totally trustworthy witness. The witness adds the following comment: "Inside me, there were evolving the first inklings of a train of thought with regard to the hypotheses that I was forming. At that very moment, I

was thinking that this might quite well be a case of self-suggestion or hypnosis, and I was looking round me to see if there was anyone nearby who might be responsible for the children's conduct. I was struck

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by the fact that the children should all be on the same mental scene, and that they should sing in unison and make the Sign of the Cross together. At times, it was almost as if they had but one soul between them. Their reactions were identical. As these thoughts were framed in my mind, one of the girls, Maria Dolores (Mary Loly), came to, whereas Jacinta remained in the same position, still in ecstasy. As Maria Dolores came out of her trance, she turned her head slightly towards me and I asked her: "Can't you see the Virgin?"

"No, *Señor*:"

"Why not?"

"She's gone," was the brief reply.

"Look at Jacinta." Mary Loly glanced at Jacinta, who was still in ecstasy. Seeing Jacinta's face and expression, she smiled. It was the first time she had seen one of her fellow visionaries in ecstasy while she herself was normal.

"What did the Virgin say to you?" I asked, after she had watched Jacinta for a few minutes. She was on the point of replying when she was once again rooted to the spot, her head clicking back, oblivious to the world around her. There ensued the following dialogue:

"Ah, Loly's back again . . . ! Where've you been, Loly? Why did you go away?" Jacinta demanded.

"Why did you go away?" Loly asked the Vision. There was a pause, and then they both said: "Oh, so that's why, is it?" And Mary Loly added: "It's so he'll believe."

I immediately thought that the "so he'll believe" must refer to myself, since it fitted in perfectly with my inner thoughts and broke the uniformity in the actions of the two children." *

"Ohhh. She's gone . . ." they both exclaimed.

Their return to normal lasted a split second.



* Quoted from a report by Fr. Ramon Maria Andreu, S.J., verified from other testimony.

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**Conchita in ecstasy raises towards the Vision the
scapular of one of the two Brothers of St. John of God,
between whom she is seen standing after the ecstasy.**

31.—On the 30th and 31st of July, they also had several visions. On the 30th, they insistently begged for proof so that everyone might believe.

"Let it happen at night, in broad daylight." When they said this, it was dark, and their confusion is hardly surprising, for they themselves were bathed in the light of the Vision.

"The Virgin looks very grave when we ask her for a miracle."

Mary Loly had a vision at her grandmother's. "Why have you come to me here, where nobody can see?"

she queried. In their desire to convince people of the reality of their visions, they preferred the rapture to overtake them out-of-doors for everyone to see, and not just for themselves in private.

It was on the 31st that people were amazed to see the visionaries walking along on their knees for the first time. They felt as though the Virgin were receding from them, and they instinctively closed the distance, without getting to their feet.

That day, they also recited the rosary in ecstasy without counting on their fingers. They did not make any mistakes in the number of

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Hail Marys, because the Virgin told them when it was time for the "Glory be to the Father". "Sometimes, Our Lady said the Hail Mary with us, but only to teach us to say it right."

On the 31st, Mary Loly experienced the phenomenon of ecstatic oscillations. Jacinta was in front of Mary Loly and so could not see her. But, she had a presentiment that her friend was on the point of overbalancing and, reaching out backwards, without once turning her head, she steadied her on several occasions.

The onlooker's field of vision was different to the visionaries'. In ecstasy, they could only see one another. On coming out of their trance, they lost their reciprocal vision. But a visionary who was in the normal state was placed on an intermediate plane of vision. She could not see the apparition, but she could establish mental or verbal contact with the others who were in a trance. The rest of the spectators were unable to do this.

Besides being able to speak to one another, they found it fairly easy to move the stiff limbs of the visionary in a trance. Others found their members quite rigid, as if paralysed.

32.—On August 1st, there were three visions; at 10:45 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 3:40 p.m.

During one of these, the little girls said the Hail Mary with the inclusion of the following expression: ". . . Holy Mary, Mother of God *and our Mother* . . ." The Vision told them that she thought it was very nice, but that they should not use this formula again until it was introduced by the Church.

In all cases, people were struck by the Vision's respect for established liturgy.

In view of the great similarity between the ensuing ecstasies and dialogues, we shall skip the details except when there is some peculiarity worth mentioning.

33.—During the third vision that day, they requested the Blessed Virgin to kiss a pebble which they had ready for a priest who had come from abroad. The visionary attempted to pronounce the name, but could not manage it. "It sounds like Canarias," (Canary Islands), the child said, "but that's not the name . . ." She finally gave up. "You say it!" There was a pause as she listened to the Vision. "That's right, Caracas!"

The name might have been said in a low voice by an onlooker. But the visionary could not have heard it in any case, because she was in that state of anaesthesia and total isolation produced by the trance. She was

referring to Fr. Cipriano Abad, who had in fact just returned from Caracas.

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Ecstatic Falls

34.—Let us pass on to the second vision, at five past nine, on August 3rd. It was during this vision that Jacinta and Mary Loly experienced their first ecstatic fall. Afraid lest she had come to any harm, Jacinta's mother threw herself forward to catch her. Mary Loly was caught by a member of the authorities from Madrid who had come to Garabandal.

The two little girls fell to the ground simultaneously, but quite unconscious. In spite of the awkward posture that they were in, they continued to see everything as usual, and to experience those moments of profound bliss in the world of their vision. In the accompanying photographs the children can be seen on the ground and on a kitchen floor. Turned upside down, these photographs show the blissful, smile on Mary Loly's face, despite her awkward posture.

An eyewitness reported that "the postures that they adopt in their falls are generally very beautiful, like sculptures. They cannot be recalled—at least I have not seen them—ever to have adopted postures that were indecorous or indecent. They may remain on the ground for a moment, or they may lie there for several minutes. When they all fall together, both the fall and the movement of getting up are usually synchronized. Generally speaking, they form a beautiful ensemble."

To quote Fr. Royo Marin: "The positions of a person in ecstasy are highly varied, but always dignified and decorous." *

On August 3rd, they fell on the altar steps in the church, and remained reclining in that position for about thirty minutes. It was there that they asked the Vision for news of Conchita, and she told the children that their friend was on her way back to Garabandal. A few minutes later, they repeated their question.

"Ah! she's back home," they were heard to say. And so it turned out. Conchita had just that moment arrived from Santander.



Ecstatic fall: Loli.

* Fr. Royo Marn, "Teología de la Perfección Cristiana", Section No. 463.

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35.—At first, people did not take part in the apparitions, and the little girls were alone in their world. It was not long, however, before the public began to join in, saying the rosary aloud and asking for objects to be kissed by the Vision. From that time onwards, the children mentioned people by name in their dialogues. They even located several people and touched them. In such cases, although they could not see the people in question, they could feel them as long as they were connected with what the visionaries were doing or saying at the time. If the contact was with someone else, the children felt nothing, due to their total insensibility to the outside world.

When they returned a medal or rosary and tried to place it over the owner's head, they commonly said to the Vision: "You take my hands and move them, because I can't see." The movement then became much quicker, and so precise that the visionaries put the rosary or chain in place without even touching the head. *

From all that we have seen so far, the reader will have grasped the naturalness and familiarity with which they addressed Our Lady, always using the Spanish familiar form of "tú" and absolutely spontaneous expressions. Is this what Our Heavenly Mother wants from us, her children?



Loli's expression during her ecststic fall leaves no doubt as to the beauty and reality of her vision.

* The visionaries returned objects to their owners in ecstasy, without taking their eyes off the Vision. Hence, they executed their movements without looking at the person in question.

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**L: Conchita used to wear tresses,
 but had her hair cut short (R.) in Santander.**

36.—On August 4th, Mary Loly and Jacinta went into an ecstasy in the pine-grove. The trance followed the customary pattern: they proffered medals and rosaries to be kissed, fell on their backs, etc. Then, they got to their knees again and Jacinta addressed the Virgin.

"Conchita's back. They cut her plaits in Santander. She's very pretty and brown, 'cause she went to the beach."

Coming to, they answered several questions asked by those around them. One bystander had a tape recorder and he showed it to the children.

"If you see the Virgin again, tell her to speak into it."

They were in the midst of this conversation, when they went into a rapture once more. Mary Loly, who had entered her trance before she had time to relinquish the microphone, held it up.

"Go on; you speak, so people will believe . . ." she coaxed the Vision. "Why not? Go on. Say something, do . . ."

At the end of the trance, they listened to the conversation recorded on the tape. Reaching the point in question, they distinctly heard a very sweet voice say softly over the loud-speaker: "No, I shall not speak"

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Everyone was completely taken aback. The owner of the tape recorder jumped up, crying: "I'm sending this to the Pope." They rewound the tape and played it back, but the voice had disappeared. Crestfallen, they made their way down the hill to Mary Cruz's house. There, they switched on the tape recorder once more. This time, everyone heard the mysterious voice. The visionaries assured them that it was the Virgin's voice. The tape was rewound, and they listened again and again, but the only thing to be heard was the monologue of the little visionaries.

Can their ears have been playing tricks on them? Was it self-suggestion? That we shall never know. We can only go by the evidence of those who were present at the time. Accounts of this strange occurrence have been given by several different witnesses, each in his own fashion, but they all coincide in the essentials. These accounts are in writing, and signed by the following witnesses: Don Gaudencio Cepeda Palacios, aged 33, from Torquemada; Don Jeronimo Diez Serrano, 38, from Cabezón de Liébana; Don Agustín Pinay Martmez, 40, from Santillana del Mar; Don Luis Toribio Millán, 38, from Aguilar del Campo; Don José Salceda Calderón, 42, likewise from Aguilar del Campo; Dona Maria del Rosario and Doña María Elisa Salceda, the latter's daughters.



**A striking picture of Loli and Jacinta walking in ecstasy.
Behind Loli is her father Ceferino.**

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Ecstatic Walks

37.—That August 4th also saw the first walk in ecstasy. In their ecstasy, the children walked either forwards or backwards. In fact, they did not need their eyes to see the way, for they were guided by the inner light of the visions.

On the 5th, they descended from the pines to the church in an ecstatic walk at breakneck speed. It was almost impossible to stop them, for they acquired tremendous impetus in their forward movements. Conchita was heard to ask forgiveness for having been to the beach, and she insisted on the need for a miracle so that everyone might believe.

During a nocturnal ecstasy on the 6th, they recited the rosary. At twelve minutes past ten, they came out of the trance, which had begun at half past nine. Fully conscious, they proceeded to say a decade to the Blessed Sacrament. The people present were overwhelmed by the contrast between the voice, speed and devotion of the children's prayers in ecstasy and in a normal state. "When in a trance, their concentration and devotion is breath-taking," said one witness.

On August 7th, they had their first vision at 2 p.m. Our Lady told them to stay at home and not go out. These instructions were part of the wonderful protection that the Virgin afforded them, thanks to which they never had a mishap, despite the masses of people from every walk of life who were flocking to Garabandal at that period. As a rule, the order to stay indoors came on days when the largest crowds gathered.



Loli and Jacinta walk in ecstasy, without taking their eyes off the Apparition, smiling all the while, or crying with the Vision.

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That day, Mary Loly lost a rosary. Unable to find it, she asked the Vision its whereabouts. The Virgin told her the exact spot where she would discover it. It was not the only time this happened. On several occasions, what with ecstatic falls and walks, medals and other pious objects were lost amidst the piles of other objects given to the children. They were retrieved by asking the Virgin for a detailed description of their whereabouts.

The ecstatic walks took different forms. At times, the four girls moved forwards together at normal speed. On other occasions, they started together only to separate later, each taking a different street and then joyously meeting up at another spot. They frequently advanced at such a speed that it became very difficult to keep up with them. At times, they advanced on their knees and, once, even sitting down. To quote the authority, Fr. Royo Marin: "There have been saints who, during their ecstasy, used to speak with the object of their contemplative Vision and even advance in an ecstatic walk. In this respect, the cases of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Magdalena de Paccis are well-known examples.*"



The children are here seen walking backwards in ecstasy; their eyes remain fixed on their vision.

* Fr. Royo Marin, "Teología de la Perfección Cristiana," Section No. 467.

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Fr. Luis' Visit



Rev. Luis Andrew, S.J.

38.—August 8th, 1961, is one of the most memorable dates in the story of Garabandal.

Twenty people set out from Aguilar del Campo at six o'clock in the morning, in five cars. Among them was Fr. Luis Maria Andreu of the Society of Jesus.

They reached Garabandal that morning, and the parish priest in Cosio handed over to Fr. Luis the key of the village church, for he himself had to go to Torrelavega that day. Conchita, Jacinta and Mary Loly received Holy Communion and, after Mass, they said that Our Lady had announced a vision for 2 p.m. in the church.

Fr. Luis Andreu always celebrated Mass with great devotion, but that day even more so, as testified by members of the congregation. At first, they put it down to the presence of the visionaries



Fr. Luis celebrating his first Msaa.

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Afterwards, it was connected with the fact that that was to be Fr. Luis' last Mass, a circumstance which intuition had perhaps told him. Some put it down to a little incident. When he was handed the wine cruet, it was found to be empty. His server was obliged to fetch wine from a house nearby, although afraid that it might not be in a fit condition to celebrate Mass. He communicated this fear to Fr. Luis, who closed his eyes, joined his hands and, after a few moments of prayer, nodded his head in assent and continued the Mass. All this, together with the visions of the eve and the ones expected that same day, may have contributed to the devotion and general fervor at Mass that day. The fact is that, after Mass, the congregation commented on the silence, piety and general devoutness with which they and the celebrant had taken communion before the altar.

At 12:10 p.m., the children went into an ecstasy. Conchita was heard to insist on the need for a public miracle. "At Lourdes and Fatima you gave them proof . . ." She smiled. "D'you want me to show you what I've got?" She held up seven or eight rosaries. "You're to kiss them ..." "Someone brought us some dolls, today" "How d'you like me with my hair short?" "You're coming this afternoon? Oh, how lovely!"

Jacinta proceeded. "Have we got to stay two in each house again this afternoon?" "How old are you?" "You're three years older than me ..." "Six?" "Oh, yes, of course. Twelve and six makes eighteen. You're seven years older than Mary Cruz; she's eleven."

They then asked her why the angel had not returned, and commented on the arrival of some priests who had come to Garabandal for the first time. "One of them said Mass very slowly and very nicely."

"When we ask you for proof, why do you look so grave? It's nearly two months now," Conchita queried.

"Give it now, right away," insisted Mary Loly. "You always say you'll give it in time, in time. . ."

They walked backwards as far as the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary. There, they recited the rosary with touching devotion and had a fall in ecstasy. Finally, they were told what time to expect the Vision that evening.

This dialogue is quoted, after due verification, from the notebooks of Don Andres Pardo, Fr. Valentin Marichalar and Fr. Luis Maria Andreu, simply to stress yet again the amazing familiarity and

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naturalness of the children's conversations with Our Blessed Mother. Many feel that it should serve as an example to us all.

"A Miracle, A Miracle!"

39.—At 9:35 p.m., on August 8th, the second vision of the day commenced. All four children fell in ecstasy at the foot of the steps to the high altar. They heaved a sigh.

"Yes, as you wish, as you command . . . We haven't given any proof yet, and people don't believe.... I don't mind going all over the place. Anything you say...."

They rose to their feet and left the church in ecstasy, prepared to make a tour of all the spots where they had had apparitions.

"When's the next time we'll see you, so the people can come? I heard people saying it's an illness we've got, and the little kids throw stones at us ... If you're pleased with us, then it's all the same to us....."

In no time they had climbed the hillside to the pines. Mary Loly was trembling.

"Yes, this is where the chapel's going to be built . . . This is a good spot. . . Shall we kneel down?" They knelt and sang the hymn to St. Michael. They kissed something in the air. At that moment, Fr. Luis Andreu looked deeply moved. He turned pale and repeated four times, in a distinct voice: "A miracle, a miracle . . ."

The little girls retraced their steps to the church, after what Fr. Luis described as "an impressive descent" from the pines. Conchita realized that she had lost a rosary that had been entrusted to her.

"I've lost the rosary; it was the student's," she said to the Vision. "I'm so upset. Will he scold me? Eh? Where did I drop it? Up the hill. Higher up than where we saw you?"

They said the rosary, led by Mary Loly and Conchita.

These notes are taken from Fr. Luis' note-book. *They were the last lines that he was ever to write.*

In their descent from the pines, "the children seemed to have wings on their heels". * They lost two rosaries on the way down. One belonged to Fr. Luis, and was mislaid by Mary Loly, although the Virgin told her where it had fallen. The other belonged to the "student", a seminarian called Don Andres Pardo.

Mary Loly wanted to run and fetch it at once, but it was very late.

"Not now; it's late. Tomorrow, in daylight, you can go and find it, and, *if I don't come back again*, you keep it safe and give it to my brother when he comes, because he'll certainly come," Fr. Luis said.

* The words of Fr. Royo Marin.

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The child found it without trouble, because the Virgin had told her where it had fallen, and under exactly which stone it was lying.

This fact is significant. The rosary in question was the size of a half dollar, a finger rosary of the type with a large hole so that it can be made to revolve around a finger. It was lost in pitch darkness in the course of a fast run up a stretch of mountainside. The child to whom it had been entrusted told the Vision of its loss and, after a few brief directions, identified the stone under which it lay.

Mary Loly kept the rosary very carefully until Fr. Ramon Andreu came. For, as his brother had assured her before his death, Fr. Ramon was bound to come to get it.

"Today is the happiest day of my life."

40.—What happened in Don Rafael Fontaneda's car, in which Fr. Luis Andreu was travelling, on August 8th and in the early hours of the 9th, is best told by Señor Fontaneda himself. He was driving home from Garabandal accompanied by his wife, their daughter, the chauffeur, Don Jose Salceda and Fr. Luis himself. This is his version, written only a few hours afterwards.

"That day, August 8th, we met Fr. Valentin Marichalar, parish priest of Cosio and San Sebastian de Garabandal, and he handed over to Fr. Luis the keys to the church, requesting him to stand in as parish priest, since he himself had to go to Torrelavega. I noticed that Fr. Luis was looking very pleased. "Faito," he called to me, "I'm parish priest of Garabandal for the day." And he joked about it.

The Mass which he celebrated in the church at San Sebastian was thought by many of the congregation to be very moving indeed.

The children had an ecstasy that morning. Fr. Luis stood close by them and, as on previous occasions, took notes of everything they did and said. During this trance, there were moments when Fr. Luis seemed totally absorbed. At one juncture, those nearest him could see tears on his cheeks; silent tears that appeared to be caused by some special realization that he was witnessing something extraordinary.

When I mentioned this to his brother Fr. Ramon Maria Andreu, the following day, he was very much surprised, for he had never seen his brother betray his emotion in that way. "I've never seen him cry," he said.

That afternoon, the children's ecstasy took them up to the pines and down again at tremendous speed. Throughout the time that they spent in the pine-grove. Fr. Luis examined them very closely. It was as though he did not want to miss a single detail of what

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was happening. We suddenly noticed what seemed to be a flood of emotion overtake him, and he repeated the words, "A miracle, a miracle!" four times over, in a loud and obviously deeply moved voice. Then, he fell silent, and the children started the descent, remarking in ecstasy that they were going to the church. As usual, they said this in their conversation with the Virgin.

They made the descent to the church at whirlwind speed. Fr. Royo Marin, O.P., told everybody where they were making for. "Run to the church. The children have got wings on their heels."

Some of us walked down from San Sebastian de Garabandal to Cosio, while others descended in a jeep. Out of deference to the cloth, Fr. Luis was made to go in the jeep. I saw that he looked very happy. My relatives who drove with him tell me that he expressed his happiness in no uncertain terms, and also spoke of his absolute certainty as to the truth of the visionaries' claims.

Once in Cosio, those of us on the expedition got into our vehicles and, although asked to drive home in my sister's car, Fr. Luis chose to join me, since he had come with me in the first place.

On the back seat of the car sat my wife Carmen, my daughter Mary Carmen, aged eight, and myself. Those in front were Jose Salceda, who was at the wheel, and Fr. Luis.

Almost the whole way, we spoke of all we had seen that day. Fr. Luis told me that he had discussed matters with Fr. Royo Marin, and that they had agreed on every point. Both my wife and I, and Jose Salceda, too, noticed an air of immense happiness in Fr. Luis, as well as absolute certainty in what he said. He spoke unhurriedly, and repeated over and over: "How happy I am!", "I'm full of joy! What a present the Virgin has given me! There can't be the slightest doubt any longer that what is happening to the children is true." We proceeded to chat in this vein for a time. At Puentenansa, we stopped to quench our thirst. Fr. Luis had an unchilled soft-drink.

At Torrelavega, we came across a jeep that had made the trip with some other people from Aguilar del Campo. It was the same vehicle that had driven us up the trail to San Sebastian de Garabandal. We halted to see if they were in trouble. José Salceda and Fr. Luis got out and talked with them for a while.

On the second stage of the drive home, I asked: "Father, why don't you sleep for a while?" He assented and slept for about an hour, until shortly before we reached Reinosa. On awaking, he said: "I must have slept very soundly. I feel completely rested. I am not at all tired."

We were all feeling sleepy, for it was four o'clock in the morning. Near Reinosa, we stopped to drink at a public water fountain. We resumed our journey. After entering the town, Fr. Luis repeated

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once again the words that had never been far from his lips all during that drive through the night. "I feel overwhelmed with joy. What a wonderful present the Virgin has given me! How lucky to have a Mother like that in Heaven! We shouldn't be afraid of the supernatural. The children have given us an example of the attitude we should take to the Blessed Virgin. I haven't the slightest doubt that this business of the children is true. Why can she have chosen us? Today is the happiest day of my life."

Having said this, he fell silent. I asked him a question. Not obtaining an answer, I asked him: "Father, is something wrong?" I thought he must be feeling car-sick. "No, nothing; sleepy," came the reply. His head bowed forward onto his chest, and he made a slight coughing sound.

José Salceda turned towards Fr. Luis. Observing that his eyes had turned upwards, he said: "The Padre has been taken very bad." My wife grasped his wrist and, feeling no pulse, cried out: "Stop, his pulse has stopped; there's a hospital here." Believing him to be car-sick, I had tried to open the door as soon as the car pulled to a stop. "Don't worry, Father; it's nothing serious. You'll get over it in a minute," I reassured him. My wife said: "Let's take him to the hospital." "Don't talk nonsense," I replied. But, she insisted. "Yes, he's unconscious."

We had stopped some five or ten yards beyond the hospital door. We rang the bell, and a nurse opened the door immediately. Seeing Fr. Luis, she at once declared that he was dead. She nevertheless gave him an injection.

Meanwhile, José Salceda went in search of a priest and a doctor. The doctor was on the spot within ten minutes. His name was Dr. Vicente Gonzalez. He could do no more than confirm that Fr. Luis was dead. An instant later, the parish priest arrived and administered the last Sacraments.

After the first few minutes of bewilderment and nervousness, I telephoned Fr. Ramon Andreu, who was giving a retreat at a convent in Valladolid.

A few hours later, Fr. Royo Marin arrived to keep us company and console us. My brother and sister and brother-in-law drove over from Aguilar del Campo, and Fr. Ramon Andreu arrived about mid-morning.

Whenever my wife and I have recalled those scenes, which made such a deep impression on us, we have felt a sensation of peace and unmistakable serenity. The first thing that occurred to us to say, and the many occasions when we were asked our opinion of Fr. Luis' death, was this: "He died of joy."

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In spite of the fact that it only took a split second for him to pass from absolute normality to death, Fr. Luis died with a smile on his lips.

I asked his brother, Fr. Ramon, what precedents there were in the family for heart trouble, and he told me there were none. Fr. Luis' only ailment was hay fever in spring, but it did not prevent him carrying on with his ordinary duties. His doctors had prescribed some pills to offset this hay fever.

On August 8th, he descended to Cosio by jeep. He cannot, therefore, have been more tired than any of the rest of us. On top of having been on our feet all day in San Sebastian de Garabandal, we had afterwards trudged four and a half miles down the mountain spur to Cosio on foot.

The previous year, when he was Professor of Theology at Oña, he frequently played "*pelota*" or "*jai-alai*" on the courts there, and used to go walking through the countryside, on holidays, in the company of other professors. Indeed, he referred to these leisure hours on several occasions while staying with us.

Shortly afterwards, at San Sebastian de Garabandal, the children informed me that the Virgin had told them that Fr. Luis had seen her when he cried out "A miracle, a miracle!" while in the pine-grove. Later, when I was present during the conversations that they held with Fr. Luis' voice, all those sad scenes of the dawn of August 9th, 1961, acquired a special significance for me, with God's Providence and the love of the Virgin Mary playing an all-important part in it.

"This is the happiest day of my life," Fr. Luis had said. I wanted to ask him what he meant by that, because the happiest day in a priest's life should be the day of his ordination. But he did not give me time. He forestalled me with an answer that ushered him into eternal happiness.

Fr. Royo Marin said to us: "Really and truly, the day one reaches God's arms is the happiest day of one's life."

This is what happened at 4:20 a.m., on August 9th, 1961, on our way home from San Sebastian de Garabandal.

Just to show how gentle this transition from life to death was, let me add that my eight-year old daughter, who was travelling in the car with us, went to bed when we got home to Aguilar del Campo, and slept alone all night long without being the slightest bit afraid or uneasy.

I had with me a crucifix which had previously been kissed by the Vision at Garabandal, and this I put to Fr. Luis' lips and later gave to Fr. Ramon Andreu, who treasures it."

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41.—But this is not the end of the story of Fr. Luis. The most surprising part of all took place a few days later, when the children declared that they had spoken to him. They stated that they had seen a light, like those that accompanied the Visions, and that from this light had come the voice of Fr. Luis. On some occasions, these conversations took place in the presence of his brother, Fr. Ramon Andreu. When he heard the children say that they had spoken to his brother, he at first dismissed the entire series of phenomena as a fabrication on the part of the excessively impressionable little girls. He believed that having been upset by his brother's death, they had now taken to saying that they could speak to him just as they had formerly done with the Virgin, which was doubtless the fruit of their imaginations, too. Much to his surprise, however, he heard the children holding a conversation in ecstasy, and realized that they were discussing matters that were known only to the two brothers. They proceeded to speak of some details of the last few days, and of his death. Some of these details were unknown, even to Fr. Ramon, and it was only afterwards that they were verified. During their talk, the children even heard words in foreign languages which they had difficulty in pronouncing.

As a result of this extraordinary series of events, Fr. Andreu's mother entered a Salesian convent and took her vows on April 19th, 1962, thus realizing an ambition that she had discussed with her son Luis about ten years before his death.



The author with Fr. Luis' brothers, three of whom are Jesuits (Marcelino, Ramón and Alejandro).

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42.—If what the children claim is true, the Virgin Mary virtually "lived" in San Sebastian de Garabandal for two whole years. Hence, the difficulty in giving detailed accounts of her constant apparitions. The visionaries

were in ecstatic trances at all hours of the day and night. She appeared to them morning, noon and night. The village was constantly crammed with strangers who spent their whole time contemplating these mystical phenomena, hardly pausing to take time out to sleep or eat.

The better to convey the nature of these happenings, in this chapter we shall outline the main features of a series of trances, only quoting totally trustworthy witnesses, and recounting a few anecdotes and peculiarities, to enable the reader to get a true perspective of events at Garabandal by adding these details to the other general information.

Concern for Priests

43.—"She wishes priests to come, above all," the children said over and over again after one of their visions, on August 14th, 1961. They continually insisted on this, later showing a particular interest in priests, both in their prayers and in the reception that they gave all members of the clergy who came to visit them.

That same night, Conchita, Jacinta and Mary Loly walked in ecstasy. Without any prior agreement, they wended their way to Mary Cruz's door, where all three sang in unison:

*"Levántate, Mary Cruz,
que viene la Virgen buena
con un cestillo de flares
para su niña pequeña." **

They went on to sing some more verses in the same vein. This phenomenon of their breaking out into little improvised songs with unquestionably catchy tunes occurred on several occasions. It is all a part of the artistic gifts found in mystics when in a trance. In his work *"Teologia de la Perfeccion Cristiana"* Fr. Royo Marin says in connection with this: "We are going to group together a series

* "Get up, Mary Cruz, get up,
For the good Virgin Mary has come
With a little basket of flowers
For you her little one."

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of mystical phenomena which, although not visions, locutions or revelations, as such, are connected in a way with the mind, too. These are certain special talents for the arts and science that some people receive through divine inspiration ..."

The Voice of Fr. Luis

44.—On the 16th, they spoke to Fr. Luis. They asked him what he had seen when he cried out "a miracle" several times over. He gave them certain message's for his brother. The little girls reported that they had not seen him, but had heard him speak in exactly the same voice he had used while alive. His voice proceeded "from a light like the sun, with rays falling from it."

On the evening of the 20th, the children continued an interrupted conversation held with Fr. Luis before his death; they asked him to teach them words in foreign languages. Witnesses noted down the words that the visionaries repeated after him, first in French, then in Latin, and finally in German.

The importance of this does not lie so much in the words themselves, but in the way the children repeatedly corrected themselves when their pronunciation was wrong, until they got it right. They gave the impression of truly repeating the words after their teacher.

Then, one of the girls asked several questions, from which could be gleaned a description of Fr. Luis Andreu's winding-sheet and astounding details of his funeral. These were not even known to his brother, who was present during the conversations and could not get over his amazement. The details were all fully confirmed later.

During another trance, Fr. Luis taught them the "Hail Mary" in Greek.

When they next witnessed an apparition and asked where Fr. Luis was, the Blessed Virgin simply smiled. "After all, what need is there for you to tell us, when we already know," the children commented.



Mary-Cruz and Loli in ecstasy (1962)

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Neither sleepy nor tired

45.—When the children waited up all night in the hopes of a vision, but finally did not have one, they needed to make up for their lost sleep. On the other hand, if they went into a trance, they seemed not to require the

sleep lost during the vision. So it was that Loly sometimes went to bed at six o'clock in the morning and rose for Mass at nine, without showing the slightest signs of weariness later in the day. *

On coming out of a trance on August 21st, Jacinta declared that "The Virgin went away because there's a group of people drinking and singing". This fact was verified; several people were discovered making fun of the events at the village and showing signs of being the worse for drink.

The children were never worried and always certain of what they saw. They never argued or attempted to convince anyone, because they declared that the Blessed Virgin had told them repeatedly that "those who do not believe will believe in the end."

When the Bishop ordered the church to be locked to prevent any possible irreverence, the children told the Vision. She recommended them to obey their parents, and especially priests, at all times.

When they made the Sign of the Cross, the little girls imitated the Vision, their actions full of an unmistakable dignity that they could hardly have acquired without having a model before them to copy.

In a trance at half-past three on August 1st, Jacinta turned to Mary Loly, who was showing the Vision a sheet of paper on which she had written the words of the hymn to St. Michael. "But, if you hold the writing towards yourself, how do you expect her to read it?" laughed Jacinta.

On July 31st, Mary Cruz, Jacinta and Mary Loly were in a trance when, all of a sudden, Mary Cruz and Jacinta came to. Their transition from ecstasy to normality was gentle as usual. Seeing Mary Loly still in an ecstasy, and observing the direction of her gaze, Mary Cruz frowned in puzzlement. "What's she looking over there for? She should be looking a little more in this direction."

Mary Cruz had not had a vision for several days when the Virgin appeared with the Infant Jesus for her benefit alone. She told Mary Cruz all about her recent talks with the others. Mary Cruz undoubtedly missed some of these visions because her family had forbidden her to leave the house.

* A phenomenon reminiscent of Theresa Neumann.
See page 71 onwards in "Estigmatizados y Apariciones".

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Spirit of Obedience

46.—At one o'clock in the morning of August 25th, Conchita was at home waiting for her third summons, for she had already received two. Fr. Marichalar had devised a ruse with the parish priest from Rivadesella and another priest.

"I'm going to give you three warnings. If the Virgin doesn't call you before the last one, you'll go up to

bed," he said to her.

Fr. Marichalar left and returned shortly afterwards. "In a few moments I'll be back to send you to bed."

No sooner had he uttered these words than the child went into ecstasy.

On August 29th, in view of the large crowds, Conchita's brother asked the parish priest whether he thought he should carry the visionary indoors. Fr. Marichalar shrugged his shoulders. After a tremendous struggle, due to the increased weight of the visionaries while in a trance, the youth eventually succeeded in carrying her into the house, leaving the door open. But Conchita at once rose to her feet and walked out. She said that the Virgin had instructed her to tell her brother not to pick her up again when she was in a trance.

That same day, she touched the scapular that the Vision usually wore hanging from her wrist. "It wasn't made of cloth, or of paper, or of wood, or of metal, or of flesh; she couldn't say what it was made of . . ." reports one of her questioners.

On August 30th, while in a rapture, she was heard to remark: "How shameful if Don Valentin finds out. If he's present and hears, he'll jot it all down on his little note-pad."

In their conversations of the 31st, at the parish priest's behest, the children asked the Virgin whether she was there in body and soul. Mary Loly answered on the Virgin's behalf that she was not there in body and soul, but under another form, but that it was she. She said that the Blessed Virgin's parents were called Joachim and Anne, and her husband was St. Joseph. She also said that priests might go to the village, but that if the Bishop had forbidden this, then the first thing was to obey. They also inquired whether she minded their asking her questions. She replied that they might ask about matters connected with the Church, but not silly questions such as they had sometimes put.

The village church is usually locked at nightfall, but the door is left ajar in the daytime. On September 5th, the visionaries walked into the church in ecstasy. Fr. Marichalar soon appeared and ushered the onlookers outside. The only people left in the church were the visionaries and their parents.

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"On orders from His Excellency the Bishop, you are to leave," he said.

The children instantly emerged from their trance and walked out into the open air. Asked by the parish priest why they had entered, the unanimous reply was that "the Virgin had told them to."

Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament

47.—In their conversations stress was laid on the special veneration due among the saints to St. Joseph as Mary's spouse. The visionaries were also recommended to pray before the Blessed Sacrament since the Blessed Sacrament is "the best thing there is in churches," as the children put it.

On September 8th, the parish priest told them to inquire of the Vision the reason why the phenomena took place at night. A shadow of sadness fell across the Virgin Mary's countenance at this question.

It seems that the Blessed Virgin chose the hours when most offense was given to Our Lord. Perhaps the late hour was also intended to test the spirit of penitence of all who went to Garabandal.

Indeed, in this way the public was selected, for the discomfort of a vigil under the circumstances prevalent at Garabandal requires self-sacrifice. This "selection" of the public in the Marian apparitions has always been achieved by the lateness of the hour, the distance to be covered or the weather. On the day of the miracle of the sun at Fatima, pilgrims who reached the spot had to plod along muddy trails all the previous night. Until recently, it was extremely difficult to drive up to Garabandal by car, and on the day chosen to make the Message known, it poured with rain, as we shall see.

In one trance, the three children went home to change their dresses for longer ones, at the Vision's command. "We should always wear our dresses this long, and especially when we come to see you," said Conchita to the Vision.

In most of their trances, it became the custom for the children to offer objects to the Vision to be kissed. These had to be pious objects. Decorative rings were rejected, the only ones accepted being wedding-rings. Many a time, there was the "miracle" of their being returned. Sightless, the visionaries groped for the owner of the ring in question and unerringly placed it on the correct finger. In one such ecstasy, Mary Loly started to place a wedding-ring on the owner's right hand, as is customary in most parts of Spain. All at once, still gazing upwards, she said: "Oh, not on this one." Withdrawing the ring, she fitted it on the corresponding finger of the left hand. The woman in question was from Valencia, a province where wedding-rings are customarily worn on the left hand, not the right.

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Only on one occasion did the Vision admit an object that everyone expected to be rejected, a powder-compact. The child said to the Virgin: "Ah. So it has held the Body of Jesus, has it?" It transpired that this powder-compact had been used during the Spanish Civil War to carry Holy Communion to the sick.

In an apparition on September 15th, the Vision told them not to use cosmetics. One of the children had varnished her finger-nails for fun, and the others had rouged their lips, although they had removed the cosmetics at once. They explained that "the Virgin had seen them doing it at Ceferino's."

On September 17th, Conchita slipped a rather small ring on. When she attempted to remove it, she found that it was stuck fast. Even soap and water would not do the trick. She later went into a trance and, when the moment came to give the wedding-rings to the apparition to kiss, the ring that had obstinately refused to budge slid smoothly off.

On September 19th, Mary Loly, who was in ecstasy, was asked how many priests were in the village at that moment. She answered that there were three, and one "dressed as a Civil Guard". It turned out that an Army chaplain was in Garabandal.

On September 21st, 1961, Conchita and Mary Cruz had two summonses, and yet they did not receive a third or enter a trance. Mary Loly and Jacinta, on the other hand, had a trance lasting six minutes at 5:50 p.m., in the course of which they gave the Virgin medals and rosaries to kiss.

During the afternoon of the 24th, Mary Cruz, in an ecstasy, asked through Conchita, who was not in a trance, if there was a priest present. She replied that there was one in street clothes. On descending from the pine grove, she was heard to say: "You want me to give the priest my hand, do you? You say he's walking down beside me?" Thereupon she grasped his hand and descended to the village in a trance at his side.

In her ecstasy of August 31st, Jacinta remarked aloud that the Virgin had told her that a priest was present, wearing his cassock tucked up beneath his trench-coat. The cleric was overcome with amazement. Stepping forward, he gave her his crucifix to offer to the Virgin. "This Crucifix comes from Rome; the Pope gave it to you," said Jacinta when she returned it to him. The priest confirmed this statement.

In an ecstasy on October 2nd, Mary Loly returned straight to its owner a medal kissed by the Virgin. It had intentionally been given to the visionary through three different people, so that there should remain no clue to whom it belonged. Nevertheless, she went

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to the right person without hesitation.

The same occurred with someone else, although this time in a far more spectacular fashion, because the child groped her way through the crowd, consulting the apparition until she found the owner.

No apparition took place on October 8th. Mary Loly was in bed with a heavy cold. Mary Cruz and Conchita were taken down to Cosio by car and returned late for the rosary at the church. Conchita asked Jacinta to beg the Blessed Virgin's forgiveness on her behalf, if she saw her, for having missed the rosary.



**The girls return
the medals to
their owners.**

"Work the miracle for those who believe."

48.—On September 1st, while in ecstasy, Conchita said: "How lovely the miracle is! How I wish you would

work it soon! Why don't you! Do it just for those who believe; the people who don't believe don't mind anyhow!"

On October 16th, Mary Loly placed a wedding-ring on a woman's finger and, taking another, she worked her way through the onlookers until she faced a stranger who proved to be the husband of the lady who had handed the visionary the two rings.

In the course of the same trance, a stranger entered the house. It was his first visit to Garabandal. In his arms he bore an ailing child, convulsed with sobs. The visionary at once made her way towards the stranger and made a Sign of the Cross over the mite with her crucifix. The child instantly stopped crying and chuckled happily. Overcome with emotion, the father said: "I've never seen him smile until today." On emerging from her trance, Mary Loly asked after the sick child. "The Virgin said I was to tell you not to worry," she informed the parent. At that very moment, Jacinta arrived on the scene in an ecstasy. Inquiring for the same man, she gave him the same message of assurance from the Virgin.

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That very day, a totally skeptical priest from Asturias arrived wearing street clothes. He watched one of the children approach him. She offered him a crucifix to kiss several times. "If this is genuine," he thought to himself, "let the child come to." In an instant the visionary emerged from her ecstasy, smiled at the priest and turned to go home. Hardly had she taken a few steps, when she again went into a trance. The priest then said to himself: "If you've just made the Sign of the Cross over me with your crucifix because I am a priest, I want you to prove it to me again, giving me the crucifix to kiss and crossing me several times." This was a thing that the visionary had not yet done to anyone.

No sooner had this request formed in his mind than the child turned round, came to him, "smiled, and besides proffering me the crucifix to kiss, made the Sign of the Cross over me three times in succession."

Seeing some visitors giving the children photographs to be signed, the priest followed suit. To his great astonishment, a few moments later the photograph was returned to him with a dedication alluding to his priesthood, despite his lay garb.

On orders from the parish priest, the little girls asked the Vision why she sometimes appeared under different titles. The reply came back: "I am Mary, the Blessed Virgin, and there is but one Blessed Virgin."

On another occasion, Fr. Marichalar, who entertained doubts as to the supernatural cause of the happenings at Garabandal, drew near to the child who was then talking to the Vision. She was clearly heard to say: "Oh, Don Valentin believes less today, does he?" The parish priest was taken aback. He had not confided his doubts to anybody.



**Conchita, in ecstasy,
makes the Sign of
the Cross.**



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Pre-arranging the Hour

49.—In an apparition during the first half of November, the Blessed Virgin told the children that, after Saturday the 18th of that month, they would not see her again until Saturday, January 13th. And so it came about.

A young French Jewess called Catherine went to Garabandal one day, accompanied by a Catholic friend who was giving her instruction in the Catholic Faith. Conchita asked her when she was to be baptised, to which Catherine replied that, since she was only nineteen years old, she intended to wait until she was twenty-one, because her parents would not grant her permission. At Catherine's request, Conchita recited the Hail Mary in Greek, and some phrases in French that she had been taught by the late Fr. Luis Andreu. That afternoon, everyone attended the rosary service. The children could not take their eyes off Catherine. They were quite nonplussed by her case. Afterwards, they went to Ceferino's, for Mary Loly was there and had already received one summons. Shortly before falling into a trance, the child went to her bedroom to fetch a bottle of holy water; this she had been advised to do in case the Vision was the devil. Asked how many summons they had received, Mary Loly and Jacinta answered: "Three minus a little bit." True enough, instants later they fell into an ecstasy.

"She isn't a Catholic, she isn't a Catholic . . . She's only nineteen . . . She hasn't been baptised yet . . ." they were heard to say to the Vision.

They started to offer the Vision the medals to be kissed. Jacinta sought in vain the one Catherine had given her. Mary Loly then drew the bottle of holy water from her pocket. Only a little was left; the rest had earlier been sprinkled round the floor of the room prior to the trance. Taking the bottle, Loly cast the water up into the air. Then it happened. The water seemed to hang for a moment, concentrated in a single bubble, suspended over Catherine. Then, it fell on her in a little shower, sprinkling nowhere but on her head. This phenomenon was connected with Catherine's delayed baptism. The children afterwards related that the Virgin had laughed when they told her they had brought the holy water in case it was the devil. And, when they mentioned Catherine, the Virgin instructed them to throw the contents of the bottle up in the air, and they would "see what would happen". As a result of this strange occurrence, and all she saw and heard at Garabandal, Catherine became a Catholic a few days later.

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From November 1961, the apparitions became fewer and farther between. Now, however, the little girls knew in advance the exact date when they would next have a vision. Here, we quote a letter on the subject from Dr. Ortiz Perez of Santander:

"In the events at Garabandal, it is truly surprising to note the precision with which the visions have occurred, without there having been a single error in the dates forecast.

"In this respect, it is interesting to hear the visionaries' statement during one of our chats. 'When the Virgin announces that we shall see her, she never fails us. The same is not the case when we insistently beg her to come, although she does grant our request sometimes'.

"I myself have noticed the enormous yearning that they have often had to see the Blessed Virgin. 'Just think if she were to appear now!'; 'How I wish I could see her now . . . !' These utterances have been made in circumstances that were highly favorable for self-suggestion, yet their wishes in such cases have never materialized.

"I find these details interesting because they are proof of the absence of self-suggestion.

"I enclose the notes taken during our visit to San Sebastian de Garabandal on December 8th last. Maria Dolores declared that she would see her again on January 13th, Mary Cruz and Jacinta on the 16th, and Conchita on the 27th. When returning from saying the rosary in the sunken lane on December 9th, the latter remarked to my wife: 'What ages it seems till the 27th! After that I'll see her many times in succession!' This mention of 'many times in succession' leads us to assume that she was told this in the last vision, because until that day she had only mentioned the one on the 27th.

"I also enclose some data on the boy in Barcelona who seems to have been cured in such a surprising fashion. The data was taken down directly in a statement made by his family to the sergeant-major of the Civil Guard at Puentenansa."



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When the girls go into an ecstasy, they fall to their knees in a flash with crushing force. A film recording the moment of entering an ecstasy has been examined in slow motion, photograph by photograph, but the fall itself is not to be seen on a single frame. In a split second they pass from a normal standing position to their kneeling in ecstasy. How is it, one may well ask, that they can fall onto jagged stones and yet not come to any harm, and show no sign of pain?

In one trance, Conchita walked through the streets of Garabandal on her knees. She was wearing long stockings. After the ecstasy, they were found to be undamaged, despite the roughness of the ground.

During her vision on January 27th, 1962, Conchita was given a medal and chain. The chain was locked with a safety-catch and was very tricky to unfasten. Conchita did not know how the catch worked. Finding that she was unable to open it, the child appealed to the Vision. "It's broken, I can't do it. You put it on for me . . ." The chain was in place in no time, although the visionary herself could not work the catch.



**Without taking their eyes off the Vision,
the girls return the medals to their owners.**

Many have been the cases of medals kissed by the Virgin acquiring on occasions a curious luminosity, and of rosaries that have sometimes given off an unmistakable scent of roses.

Given their age and constitution, the children ought to have been exhausted, for the length and frequency of the trances was enough to have made them seriously ill. But, their appearance and behavior were proof of their glowing health.

"You didn't believe before, but now you do."

50.—A skeptic came to Garabandal. During one vision, he thought

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to himself: "For me to believe this, the child will have to take my rosary from its case and hand it to me."

The visionary at once approached him, handed him his rosary and, to everyone's astonishment, said, "You didn't believe before, but now you do."

A lady asked Maria Dolores whether the Blessed Virgin was sad. "The Virgin can't be sad, because she's in heaven," the child replied.

"I know that," the woman insisted, "but, I mean, is she sad because of the sins of the world?"

"We're all sad because of *them*," came the reply! Who can put such answers on their lips?

It does not fall within our scope to go into all the cases of inexplicable cures and private miracles that are claimed to have been worked, because personal opinions exert too great an influence on such accounts. Let us simply say that many prodigies have already been attributed to Our Lady of Garabandal. Among these, according to his doctors and relatives, is the surprising cure of a son of Don Antonio Soldevilla. And that of Don Juan Fontanillas Buj, a seventeen-year old youth who was taken to San Pablo Hospital in Barcelona on October 5th in a critical condition following a motorcycle crash. He did not recover consciousness until the 14th. That day, he underwent two operations to no avail. His mother was informed that he would in all likelihood die. That night, a crucifix kissed by the Virgin was placed round his neck. In the early morning of the 15th, he awoke in a perfectly normal condition, and his injuries had healed. Equally marvelous was the alleged cure of Antonio Salcedo Fornall, of Chiclana de la Frontera. But, we cannot make it the aim of this book to delve into such delicate matters, for they are quite beyond our scope.

The visionaries have a great spirit of penitence, which is their interpretation of the teachings of the Vision. They used to rise at six o'clock each morning to say the rosary in the sunken lane. They did penance by placing dry pine needles in their shoes; they walked barefoot over thorns, etc. As a rule, phenomena resulting from hysteria take place under far more comfortable circumstances.

One night, a party arrived from Santander. Among them was an artist who showed Maria Dolores a medal that he had designed. "There's a painter, here," she said to the Vision. "He wants to know if you look all right on this medal . . . They make you look so ugly in all the holy pictures! And in fact you're so pretty . . . ! Eh? You say it's all right . . . ?"

The painter, who was standing close beside the visionary, was visibly overjoyed.

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One of the reports written by Senorita Ascension de Luis, dated March 18th, 1962, reads as follows:

"Loly left Jacinta's house still in ecstasy and walked all round the village saying the rosary. Her gait seemed quite normal, and yet those of us who were following her had to run to keep up. In this fashion, she proceeded to the sunken lane, where the stony ground proves difficult to negotiate. The child went up the lane and descended again backwards at an incredible speed."

In another report, on May 9th, 1962, a canon from one of the



**This is the lane
where "the child
in ecstasy
went up...
and descended
again backwards
at a incredible
speed"**

Catalonian dioceses made the following statement:

"On Easter Sunday, Don Valentin asked the Lord to make him see clearly, once and for all, whether or not the apparition of the Virgin to the children was true. As proof, he asked that, if it was true, the children should come to him in ecstasy that very night while he was asleep, wake him up, make the Sign of the Cross over him and give him the crucifix to kiss. And so it came about that, shortly after two o'clock in the morning, one of the visionaries came in a trance to the door of the house where Don Valentin was staying the night, and started to knock at the door. As all the inmates were in bed, at first nobody answered. But, so violently did the child persist in her knocking, that the door was eventually opened. Don Valentin was still fast asleep, unaware that the child was in the house. Still in ecstasy, she reached the parish priest's bedroom. There, without any warning knock, she entered and pressed her crucifix to his lips until he awoke with a start. The child proceeded to make the Sign of the Cross over him several times with the

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crucifix, smiled sweetly at him and left the room."

"Fr. Marichalar was 'punished'—as the same report puts it—by the Apostolic Administrator, the Auxiliary Bishop of Santander, for a period of two months, because he was thought to be the originator of the goings-on at Garabandal. This in itself, is to my mind, one of the most convincing points in favor of the supernatural cause of these events."

Some most impressive letters were written by Conchita in her awkward scrawling handwriting, replying on Our Lady's behalf to petitions made to her in prayer, without the visionary knowing anything about them, but simply fulfilling her mission as a messenger.

There is also the surprising case of the conversion of a Protestant, Don Maximo Foerschler, of Madrid. Here is a short quotation from the letter he himself wrote to Don Rafael Fontaneda Perez on March 29th, 1962: "The reason I am writing to you is so that you may share my great joy, for, next Sunday, God willing, I shall join the Catholic Church like all of you and receive Holy Communion from Fr. Ramon Andreu, a Jesuit priest * after a quiet baptism in private.

"This is all I have to tell you, and I do so much moved and with the utmost joy."

Peculiarities of Certain Trances

51.—When the children went into an ecstatic trance with some object still clutched in their hands, it often proved impossible to make them relinquish their grasp or to pull it away from them. The same was true if they had a hold on somebody's arm. They continued to cling to that arm during the ecstasy, even when walking along, and forcing the owner to kneel down or walk by their side throughout.

On March 17th, 1962, Mary Loly gave the Vision several articles to kiss, among others a reliquary belonging to the Marques de Santa Maria and his wife, who are fortunate enough to have been present during a great many of the visionaries' mystical phenomena. The reliquary contained what was thought to be a splinter of the True Cross, but there were doubts as to its authenticity. The Vision confirmed that it had belonged to the True Cross. Mary Loly then made as though to give the Vision the Marquesa de Santa Maria's wedding-ring, but, instead of removing it from the latter's finger, she took her hand and raised it to the Vision's lips, twisting the ring round so that she might kiss every part of it.

On the Feast of St. Joseph, Mary Loly began to write on a slip of paper while in an ecstasy. She shielded the piece of paper from view with her hand so that nobody should see it: "To Don José a

* Fr. Ramon Andreu is the brother of Fr. Luis, who died when returning home from Garabandal. Four of the Andreu brothers were Jesuits. The three still alive [can be seen in a photograph](#) in the company of the author.

Happy Feast Day from Loly". The Don José in question was a stranger, a priest who had arrived at Garabandal that day without saying a word to anyone. Then, taking a holy picture, she wrote: "To Don José, with best wishes from the Virgin". While she was writing this note, her father covered her eyes to prove to everybody that she could not see what she was doing.

In a report dated April 15th, 1962, which I have in front of me as I write, a witness says: "Four of us stayed on at Conchita's, a priest, another cleric who had come in street clothes, the youth who had accompanied them, and a friend of mine. The young man inquired of Conchita whether she had remembered to ask the Virgin for a reply to the three questions to which he had requested an answer. 'Yes, I asked her,' Conchita replied, 'but the Virgin told me to answer you by letter when you write to me, because it isn't three things that you want the answer to, but more.' Her audience were taken aback. 'How many?' the youth inquired. 'Five,' came the reply. Conchita herself had no idea of these questions. My friend told me the story as a clear example of conscience reading, despite the fact that he is most guarded, when it comes to asserting things that have no natural explanation."

His report continues. "During her ecstasy, Mary Loly made the Sign of the Cross over all those present. One of our number, who



"When in ecstasy, light falling in their eyes does not cause them to blink" (See text)

had already been crossed, changed his position, and when the little girl came to him a second time, she passed him by."

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MORE VIEWS

of

the girls in ecstasy



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MORE VIEWS
of the girls in ecstasy





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The prodigies at Garabandal have brought about countless conversions and awakened not a few vocations.

At the Vision's behest, the children asked for a shrine to be built in the pine grove and dedicated to St. Michael, for it was he who appeared to them in the beginning and prepared the children for their Visions of Our Blessed Lady.

When in ecstasy, light falling on their eyes does not cause them to blink. This can be appreciated in a film taken under bright arc-lights which made no impression on the visionaries at all. But, on emerging from their trance, they could be seen to react immediately, shielding their eyes from the unbearable glare.

Let us end this chapter by recalling the case of a visitor who was wedged in the farthest corner of the house where the children were in a trance. The visitor inwardly formed a request. "If my confessions hitherto have been good, let the child come to me and offer me her crucifix to kiss." No sooner thought than done. One of the visionaries left her companions and shuffled across on her knees, in a trance, to the person in question.

I think these brief details help to complete the picture, giving added depth to the prodigies that we are examining.



Padre Pio in conversation with Carlos Campanini, an Italian television actor, who witnessed the ecstasy of June 18, 1965

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OTHER TESTIMONIES

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52.—A group of Spaniards once asked Padre Pio whether the happenings at San Sebastian de Garabandal were true. They declare that the Capuchin monk retorted in his customary harsh voice: "Are you still asking about that? How long do you expect her to appear there? She has been appearing for eight months already!"

On March 3rd, 1962, Conchita received a typewritten letter in Italian. It was unsigned and bore no indication as to the sender's address; the postmark was blurred and illegible. The letter referred to the little girls as "the blessed children of San Sebastian de Garabandal", affirming the authenticity of their visions of the Blessed Virgin, and finished: "I can only give you one piece of advice: *pray and make others pray*; because the world is at the threshold of its perdition. People do not believe in you or in your conversations with the White Lady, but they will believe when it is too late."

According to Conchita, she asked the Blessed Virgin who had sent the letter, and the Vision confirmed that it was from Padre Pio. The visionary hastened to send off her reply.

"Everything to do with Garabandal occurs under the Virgin's influence, and there is nothing natural or diabolical about it." This is how Fr. Corta ends an article published in "Estrella del Mar."

"I have not been to Heaven, but I have been to Garabandal, which is the gates of Heaven," states an eminent and saintly theologian.

Likewise, after witnessing the ecstasies that took place at Garabandal, a priest who has written some searching works on mystical phenomena said: "Though I am not infallible, as a specialist in these matters, I can assert the supernatural causes which, to my mind, are to be found in the phenomena that I have witnessed." *

The Opinions of Doctors

53.—A leading Madrid specialist forbade his medical staff to ridicule events at Garabandal. He informed them that there was no explanation for these phenomena, and that they deserve the closest attention and great respect.

* At the time of sending this manuscript to press, it was considered advisable to omit the names of some witnesses, in view of the impossibility of obtaining permission from all of them in time.

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Dr. Ortiz checks Conchita's pulse during an ecstasy.

In a letter dated February 2nd, a pediatrician writes: "The point that still draws my attention is that, after seven consecutive months of marvelous ecstatic trances, the children are still, in my opinion, absolutely normal, although many people, even without seeing for themselves, maintain that it is all due to pathological causes."

In his report on February 26th, 1962, the same specialist proceeds as follows:

"What a strange disease! One which is announced days or months in advance. In childhood, mental disorders of all kinds present characteristic symptoms which are: continual lethargy, troubled sleep, aggressiveness of character and an uncontrollable outward anxiety. After eight consecutive months of this, not only do they not show any of these symptoms, but quite the opposite."



**Mary-Loli
as she normally
appears in
every day life.**