

# The Apparitions of Our Lady at Garabandal



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**The Apparitions of Garabandal**  
**1961**  
**Our Lady of Mount Carmel**



# Apparitions at The Pines



Four girls Conchita Gonzalez, Mari Cruz Gonzalez, Jacinta Gonzalez, and Mari Loli Mazon saw the apparition

The Angel identified himself as St. Michael the Archangel and announced the Virgin Mary will appear as Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.”

They described our Lady: “She comes with a white dress, blue mantel, a crown with 12 golden stars, her hands stretched out, with a brown scapular, carrying the child in her arms:

Garabandal is a quaint hamlet of three hundred souls isolated in the gorgeous Cantabrian mountains of northwestern Spain. It lies about sixty miles southwest of the provincial capital and episcopal see of Santander. Some seventy solid rustic stone houses stand huddled together on a narrow strip of land overlooking the delightful wooded valley which stretches northward toward the plain below.

The story of Garabandal opens on **June 18, 1961**, on a Sunday at eight-thirty in the evening. Four simple, unsophisticated girls were playing in a sunken lane, called the calleja, at the southern extremity of the village. The sound of thunder was suddenly heard and later a brilliant angel appeared, first to Conchita (Maria Concepcion) Gonzalez and then almost immediately afterward to Loli (Maria Dolores) Mazon, Jacinta Gonzalez and Maria Cruz Gonzalez. Notwithstanding the identical family names, none of the girls were closely related. The first three girls were twelve years old and the other only eleven. However, because of the backward village environment, their mental and psychological age was considerably less. The angel came back eight more times during June.

## **Our Lady Comes**

The first time the angel spoke was on July 1st. He said: “Do you know why I have come? It is to announce to you that tomorrow, Sunday, the Virgin Mary will appear to you as Our Lady of Mount Carmel.” The angel’s mission was to prepare the children for Our Lady’s coming and to be her messenger. He returned with her the next day but came back much less frequently after that. However, the Blessed Virgin began appearing almost every day and occasionally was accompanied by the Infant Jesus whom she carried in her arms.

## **A Mother and Her Children**

**The four girls talked with the Blessed Virgin with great simplicity.** They talked about their everyday life, about going out to the fields to make hay and about getting bronzed by the sun. Our Lady delighted in their childish talk. A charming and almost disarming spontaneity marked the apparitions. In her Diary, Conchita mentions that the angel and Our Lady smiled profusely and that they laughed at some of their childish remarks. She says

that several times the Blessed Virgin kissed them. On a few occasions when she came with the Infant Jesus, she allowed them to take him in their arms. They also did simple little things to amuse and please him, such as hiding pebbles in their sleeves and in the tresses of their hair. Once, Our Lady took the crown of small golden stars from her head and permitted them to hold it in their hands. Many have seen in all this an indication of the childlike attitude we should have in our relationship with Christ and his Blessed Mother.

### The Church's position

On July 8th, 1963, the Bishop of Santander, Mons. Beitia Aldazaba, declared: "we have not found any material for ecclesiastical censure or condemnation, neither in doctrine or in the spiritual recommendations promulgated. They contain exhortations to prayer, sacrifice and devotion to the Eucharist, devotion to Our Lady in traditional forms, and to holy fear of the Lord, offended by our sins . . ."

From January 12 - 19th, 1966, Conchita, visionary of the principal prophecies and messages, was asked to go to Rome by the Prefect of the Faith, Cardinal Ottaviani. She was questioned for two hours by the same Cardinal and other members of the Sacred Congregation. From that meeting, Conchita requested an audience with Pope Paul VI. The audience took place and the Pope said to her: "Conchita, I bless you and with me the whole Church."

The Pope granted the Apostolic Blessing to the work of diffusion or promulgation of the Garabandal messages on June 12th, 1967.

It was also said that an audience was given to the Jesuit Priest Fr. Javier Escalada. The priest said to the Vicar of Christ: "there is much opposition in believing the apparitions of Garabandal." Pope Paul VI responded: "It doesn't matter. Tell the people it is the Pope who wants to publicize the messages and with great urgency."

In 1967, during the abrogation of Canon 1399 and Canon 2318, it was permitted to publish information about manifestations and to visit the places of such manifestations, without fear of any kind of ecclesiastical censure, always and when it agrees with the teachings of the Church on Faith and Christian Morals.

The Garabandal apparitions definitively passed the test.

To this date, the Church cannot declare anything about the manifestations in Garabandal, until the prophecies are fulfilled: the warning, the miracle and the permanent sign. During this time of waiting, all Catholics can visit and learn about the events of Garabandal.

The Church can only recognize the apparitions and messages of Garabandal as authentic when the prophecies are fulfilled, then the Church and the world will also recognize the events as direct work of God. Garabandal will give proof of its own authenticity.

### Church Approvals

Effective May 19, 2024, the Vatican's Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith (DDF) implemented new norms for handling alleged supernatural phenomena, replacing the 1978 guidelines, the DDF now provides six potential categories of judgment regarding the status of apparitions:

1. Nihil obstat ("Nothing stands in the way")

This is the highest level of approval. It indicates that, while not explicitly declaring the phenomenon as supernatural, the Church recognizes "many signs of the action of the Holy Spirit" in the experience and no critical or risky elements are present. The Bishop is permitted to encourage the devotion.

## 2. Prae oculis habeatur ("To be taken into consideration")

The Church recognizes important positive signs, but also identifies signs of confusion or potential risks, requiring the Diocesan Bishop to closely monitor the situation and engage in dialogue with the individuals involved.

## 3. Curatur ("It is to be cared for")

This category is used when significant critical elements are found, but the phenomenon has already spread widely and produced good spiritual fruits. The bishop is asked to manage the situation to prevent harm while fostering positive aspects.

## 4. Sub mandato ("Under mandate")

This refers to cases where the phenomenon has positive elements but is being misused by individuals or groups for personal gain, power, or control. The Vatican may send a commissioner to take oversight of the shrine or situation.

## 5. Prohibetur et obstruatur ("It is prohibited and stopped")

The Bishop is instructed to declare that the devotion is forbidden,, as it is seen as producing confusion, division, or "serious harm to the faithful".

6. Declaratio de non supernaturalitate ("Declaration of non-supernaturality") The highest authority, with the approval of the Holy Father, declares the phenomenon is deemed not to be of supernatural origin, often due to fraud or clear evidence of fabrication

The Catholic faith is based on so-called Public Revelation, which ended with the death of the last living Apostle. .

### **Notable Examples of Non-Approved Apparitions**

**Medjugorje (Bosnia and Herzegovina):** One of the most famous controversial cases. While the Vatican issued a "nihil obstat" in 2024—permitting public devotion due to positive spiritual fruits—it notably did not declare the apparitions themselves as authentic or supernatural.

**Garabandal (Spain):** These 1960s alleged visions of St. Michael and Mary are considered "not supernatural" by local bishops, though private pilgrimage is sometimes permitted without official endorsement.

**Our Lady of America (United States):** A 2020 commission of bishops concluded these mid-20th-century claims were not supernatural in origin and therefore not appropriate for public devotion.

#### **Possible Reasons for Denials:**

**Apocalyptic Sensationalism:** Predictions focused on fear or "settling scores" rather than the Gospel.


**Sectarian Spirit:** When a group surrounding the apparition becomes insular or promotes spiritual abuse.

**Personal Profit:** Financial corruption or using the "vision" for monetary gain.

**Psychological Issues:** Evidence of mental illness or "psychic" phenomena in the visionary.

Garabandal Video - 18 min

Garabandal Video with Fr Gruner – 6 min



## Praying the Hail Mary (Rosary) as Mary taught the children

The following is a actual recording of the children praying as they were taught. She prayed with them in this manner.

The tape recording that had Mary's voice could only be played once to hear then went blank.

Pray deliberately.

**This discussion is primarily about "How the Blessed Mother wishes us to Pray"**

Yes, the four children at Garabandal (Conchita, Mari Loli, Jacinta, and Mari Cruz) prayed the Rosary daily during their apparitions, often while in ecstasy.

The Blessed Virgin reportedly taught them to pray it very slowly, attentively, and from the heart, sometimes guiding them to say the

Credo and Hail Holy Queen with great deliberation.

They said, "We must think about what we are praying; praying is speaking with God and Our Lady. When we say the Our Father or the Hail Mary we are speaking with God and Our Lady, and we have to say it the way that we speak with a person that we love a lot—slowly, and from our hearts." This "from the heart" is very important. It tells us that we must put effort into paying attention to what we are praying, and to Whom we are speaking. It is possible that sometimes we pray it distractedly, and even though our lips move, our mind and heart are elsewhere, but we must try to ensure that most of the time, we do not pray like that.

**It is interesting to note that Our Lady taught the girls how to say other vocal prayers in the same deliberate manner. Her first lesson in private prayer was given on August 8, 1961, to Maria Cruz, who at the time was in ecstasy in the village church. Here is how Conchita describes this in her Diary: "...She started to say the Credo very slowly with the Blessed Virgin. Maria Cruz said that the Blessed Virgin took the lead and recited the prayer first, in order to teach her how to pray slowly. After the Credo, she said the Hail Holy Queen and then she made the Sign of the Cross very slowly, very properly."**

## Voices of Children in Spanish



### Four Parts of Garabandal

- Messages
- Warning
- Miracle
- Punishment

### The Messages

#### Message 1:

The first was given by Our Lady to the girls on July 4th, 1961; this message had already been written on a sign at St. Michael the Archangel's feet in the month of June, during the apparitions of the angel to the girls. Our Lady of Mt. Carmel asked the girls not to make this message public until October 18th. They did as Our Lady requested. In the autumn of 1961, the visionaries made known to the world the 1st message which said: *"Much sacrifice needs to be done and much penance, we have to visit the Blessed Sacrament much, but before we have to be very good. If we do not do this, a punishment will come. The cup is being filled, and if we don't change a punishment will come."*

The message speaks about sacrifice and penance and reminds us of the gospel teaching of the prediction of St. John the Baptist: "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand." (Mt 3:1-3) The same Christ inaugurates his preaching saying: "Repent, and believe in the Good News . . ." (Mc 1:15) It is the eternal message of the prophets and was insistently reminded by the Blessed Virgin Mary in La Sallette, Lourdes, Fatima, but unfortunately forgotten by the majority of people. That is why if we don't change, a punishment will come, manifesting that the justice of God has consequences for the sins of men for wrongly using their liberty.

*"The cup is filling."* This is Biblical apocalyptic language which reminds us of the 7 angels with 7 chalices of gold(15,7) full of God's anger.

*"We have to visit much the Blessed Sacrament."* This reminds us of the real presence of Christ with His Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity, in moments when even Catholics, and even priests, have lost faith in the Eucharist.

*"But before we have to be very good."* This means we have to live in a state of grace, remove from our lives mortal sin with the help of God's grace and participation of the Sacraments.

## **Message 2:**

The Blessed Virgin communicated a "second message" four years later towards the end of the apparitions.

Our Lady said to Conchita on January 1st, 1965 that the Archangel Michael would appear on the 18th of June and give a message in her name to the whole world. Through the mediation of St. Michael, Our Lady complained that the first message was not listened to and warned the world that this would be the last.

The Virgin said: *"Because it was not fulfilled and my message from October 18th, 1961 has not been made known to the world, I tell you this is the last one. Before the cup was being filled, but now it is overflowing. Many priests are walking through the path of perdition and taking with them many souls. Less and less importance is given to the Eucharist. You should prevent God's anger upon you with your efforts. If you ask forgiveness with sincerity, He will forgive you. I, your Mother, through the intercession of the Archangel Michael, want to tell you to amend your lives. You are in the last warning. I love you very much and don't want your condemnation; ask and you will receive. You should do more sacrifice; think more in the passion of Jesus."*

It is clear in this message that not hearing or obeying the messages of Our Lady have serious consequences. She insists that the cup is overflowing and "the priests are walking on the path of perdition taking with them many souls."

This phrase in the year 1965 was not all too clear, because at this time the Second Vatican Council concluded with great hope for the majority of Catholics, especially for cardinals, bishops and priests. This optimism didn't allow us to see the great crisis of faith and infidelity of many consecrated souls in the Church in the following years. In 1965 there were over 400,000 priests in the Church, and since then, 90,000 have left the priesthood. The hemorrhage was provoked by a certain current of thoughts that interpreted the teachings of the Second Vatican Council as "liberal" and "progressive."

The consequences were known. The "Deposit of Faith," the dogmas, and Christian morals were attacked.

Let us remember the violent universal opposition to the teaching office of the Church over family planning (*Humanae Vitae*), abortion, the social doctrine of the Church, catechism, the Papal authority, questions concerning the Eucharist, penance, resurrection and many more.

Because of the situation, Pope Paul VI spoke on January of 1976 about the "treason of the clerics." In another occasion the Pope said: "It was thought that after the council a day of sunshine for the history of the Church would come, but on the contrary, the day of clouds came, storm and darkness, because Satan had intervened."(6-29-1972)

*"The Eucharist is given less importance."* This prophetic announcement highlights the unbelief of and infidelity to the Real Presence of Jesus, as well as irreverence in the celebration of the Holy Sacraments by the priests.

The Blessed Virgin Mary comes as our Mother, confirming what Christ from the Cross gave us: "Woman, behold your son. Son, behold, your Mother." ( Jn 19:26). She always comes insisting and asking us to sacrifice more and to meditate more on the Passion of her Son.

In the Garabandal apparitions many prophetic visions exist about the immediate future of humanity and the Church. In the prophetic announcement of Garabandal, Conchita speaks of a warning, a miracle, and a punishment for humanity.

## The Warning

January 1st, 1965, Conchita had a new apparition of Our Lady in which Mary spoke about the "warning," a warning for the world to amend itself.

Conchita tells us: "I cannot say in what it consists, she has not ordered me to say it. She has not told me when it will be. Therefore, I don't know. I do know that it will be visible for the entire world; it is a direct work of God and it will occur before the miracle. I don't know if people will die. They can only die from the impression they see."

In one of her letters she speaks about the warning:

"This warning," she said, "is like a punishment, for the good and for the bad: for the good so they can draw closer to God and for the bad to tell them the end of times is near. This is to be the last warning."

The warning will be the fruit of God's justice and of his Mercy. Of His justice, because it is going to purify us of our sins; of His Mercy, because it will give us an opportunity of greater conversion in our spiritual life.

The warning that will come to the world will be external to us and will happen in the sky; a luminous flame of ardent fire, felt on the entire earth. Most importantly, interiorly we will see our conscience before God's justice - what we have done wrong and what we have not done. In short, it will be like a particular judgment but while still living. As well, the conscience of the world will be corrected - a purification before the miracle - to see if by the warning and the miracle we convert.

## The Miracle

The girls asked insistently to Our Lady for a miracle. Like in Fatima, she said: "I will do a miracle for all to believe."

In a note Conchita wrote:

"About the miracle, Our Lady only told me. She had prohibited me to say what it is about. I cannot say the date, until eight days before. What I can say is that it will coincide with a Church event and with a feast day of a Saint, a martyr of the Eucharist. It will be at 8:30 pm on a Thursday and be visible for all who are in town and around the mountains. The sick who are present will be healed and the unbelievers will believe. It will be the greatest miracle Jesus has done for the world. There will be no doubt that it comes from God and for the good of humanity. A sign of the miracle will stay for ever, near the pines. It can be filmed and televised."

We can signal out essential aspects of the miracle, according to what the girls related in interviews and letters, especially Conchita.

- Conchita knows the exact date, and communicated it to Pope Paul VI, to his confessor and to Cardinal Ottaviani, who was Pre-perfect of the Holy Oder, known today as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.
- Conchita will announce it to the world 8 days before the date.
- There will be one year between the warning and the miracle.
- It will last between 10 minutes and 1/4 of an hour.
- It will occur on Thursday at 8:30 pm in the afternoon.
- Between the 6 - 16 in one of these three months: March, April & May.
- This day will not be a Marian Feast day.
- It will coincide with the feast day of a martyred saint in relation with the Eucharist.
- It will also coincide with an important, rare, singular event for the Church as well as for all Christianity - a happy and fortunate event.
- It will be the greatest miracle Jesus has done for the world and will stay forever.
- It will be visible in Garabandal and in the mountains around the area; it cannot be touched, but it will be able to be filmed and televised.
- It will not be necessary for the girls to be present at the moment of the miracle.
- The sick present will be healed and the unbelievers will believe.
- The Pope will see the Miracle "where ever he may be."

In the first days of June 1963, the bells in Garabandal started to ring. Conchita, who was in the kitchen of her house with her mother Aniceta, immediately exclaimed:

"The bells are ringing for a deceased. Surely it is for the Pope (John XXIII had died). Now there is only three Popes left." **(We have had 6 already ! but only three in the second millennial)** Her mother, surprised, asked her what she said and Conchita responded that the Virgin told her after this Pope only three will be left. Her mother asked her if the "end of the world" will come. Conchita responded: "not the end of the world, but the end of times." Aniceta asked if that did not mean the same. So Conchita responded: "The Virgin said to me: "After this Pope only three are left: and later, the end of times." (Diary of Conchita from 5-6-63)

The end of times should not be confused with the end of the world; the end of times coincide with the final era that, after the purification of humanity and renewal of the Church, will prepare for the beginning of the era of the glorious reign of Jesus Christ. This will be an era of holiness and grace. We have to remember the end of times started with the first coming of Christ.

The blind man Joey Lomangino will have new eyes the day of the miracle. Joey Lomangino was born in Brooklyn on June 27th, 1931. In June 1947, while inflating a tire, it blew up and a 10 inch fracture between his eyes resulted. Also, his optic nerves and olfactory senses were divided. The same year of the accident, through the help of his friends, Joey converted. One night soon after he was sleeping when a voice woke him up and asked him to pray the rosary.

In 1963, Joey traveled to San Giovanni Rotondo to see Padre Pio, and recovered his sense of smell even though he had no physical possibility of it. Joey asked Padre Pio if it is true the Virgin appeared to four girls in Spain. Padre Pio responded: "Yes." Joey then went to visit Garabandal and returned there many times. In one of Conchita's ecstasies the Virgin blessed Joey's Miraculous medal with a kiss on March 19th, 1964, the feast day of St. Joseph. Conchita had a locution and the Virgin said to her that Joey would receive new eyes the day of the Great miracle . . . that he will see the same day of the Miracle . . and the voice he heard in 1947 was her voice, the Blessed Virgin Mary's.

We recall what the Second Vatican Council said about miracles in the Decree Ad Gentes, no. 12, "Christ healed all types of illness and ailments, as a sign of the coming of the kingdom of God . . ."

The day after the Miracle the body of the deceased Father Luis Maria Andreu will be unearthed and it will be incorrupt. The death of Father Luis Maria Andreu is one of the important reference points in the history of Garabandal. Father Luis was a professor of theology in the school that the Company of Jesus had in Burgos. He was 36 years old when he died. He and his brother Ramon arrived in Garabandal to investigate if the apparitions were authentic. August 8th, 1961 during an ecstasy of the visionaries, Father Luis appeared to be very moved and emotional and four times repeated the word "Miracle! Miracle!" According to the girls Father saw the great miracle announced by Our Lady. After remarking that it was the happiest day of his life, he assured everyone he was very happy because Our Lady had given him a gift, and he insisted that he was well and not tired. However, he died that same evening in the car without the slightest movement and with a sweet expression on his face. Father Andreu died of happiness.

An important event about this miracle is that Father was buried August 10th, 1961 and fifteen years later, in the beginning of 1976, the seminary where Father Luis had been buried was transformed into a psychiatric hospital. As a result, Father Luis's body had to be exhumed and it was totally corrupted in a skeleton state. Through this, Divine Providence wanted the body of Father Luis Andreu to be found decomposed and verified in an irrefutable manner. Does God want to leave us a sign of hope, within the eschatological context of the apparitions, through the incorruption of a body previously decomposed? "The dead will resurrect incorrupt and we will be transformed" ( 1 Cor 15, 52 ).

## The Punishment

The punishment was announced by the girls in the first message of October 18th, 1961. The girls narrated the punishment as best they could according to what they saw the night of June 19 - 20, 1962.

"It was similar to rivers transformed into blood. Fire came down from heaven and worse things; a great heat, scorching thirst, and water that evaporated. Men were chained and in desperation trying to kill one another; but due to lack of strength they either fell into the flames, while others threw themselves into the ocean. However, the water seemed to boil and activate the flames."

Conchita narrates in one of her writings:

"The punishment is dependent on whether or not humanity listens to the messages of Our Lady and the miracle. In the case that it does occur, I know in what it will consist because I have seen the punishment. I can reassure that if it does come, it is worse than if we were wrapped in fire; worse than if we had fire on top and fire underneath. I don't know the time that will pass before God sends it after the miracle has occurred."

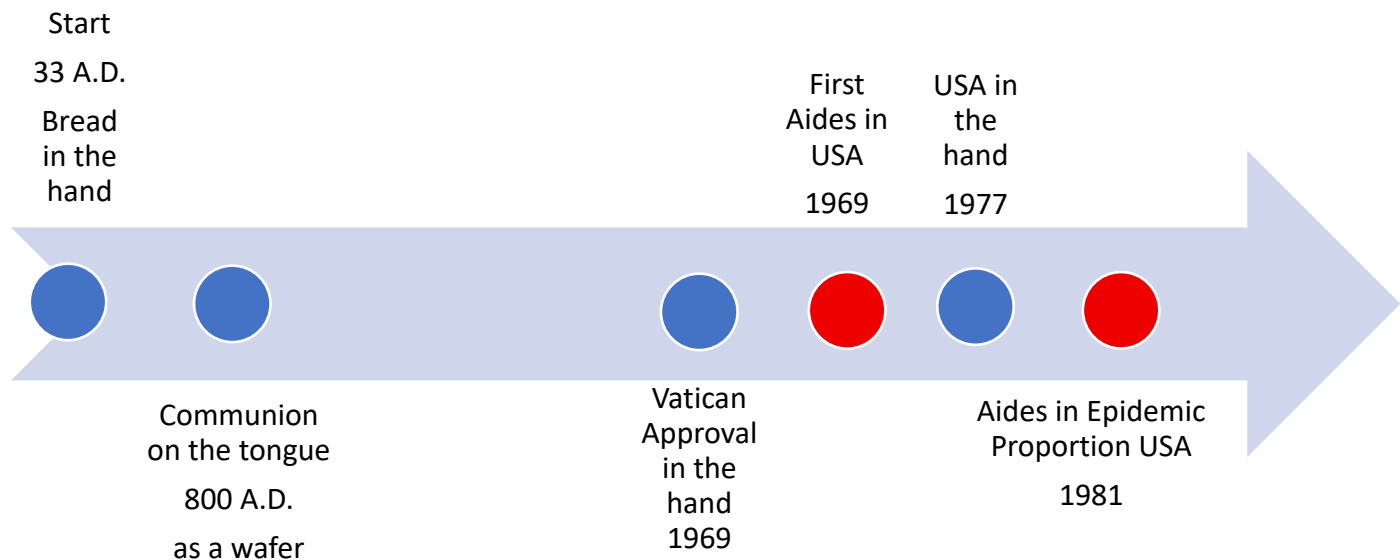
The punishment of Garabandal reminds us of Sacred Scripture: it is the revelation to man of his sinful condition, of the narrow relationship between sin and punishment, of a God who judges and saves; punishment is nothing other than a healing medicine that seeks to restore the straight path. For some it will be a dead-end and eternal condemnation; for others, it will be an invitation to "return" to God. The Blessed Virgin in Garabandal did not come to preach punishments; she came to give us the means to avoid them: "I don't want your condemnation," Our Lady said in her message. But if we do not obey the call of God to conversion, if we continue to willfully reject God and His healing love, the remission will end and the punishment from our sins will fall upon us . . . this will be the announced punishment."

## The Miracle of Holy Communion

The girls received Holy Communion frequently from St. Michael the Archangel. Many pictures can be seen of the visionaries receiving the invisible host. But on one occasion the girls asked the Angel to do a miracle for the people to see and believe. St. Michael responded that God was going to perform a miracle through his intercession and the girls. The miracle would occur on June 18th, 1962. On this day at 1:30 am, Conchita entered into ecstasy and a visible host suddenly and mysteriously appeared on her tongue. A person present with a camera took the picture of this miracle.



The Sacrament of the Eucharist is one of the basic pillars of the message of Garabandal. The Virgin calls us to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and in some messages she told Conchita that she was sad because Conchita did not spend time with Jesus. "Why don't you go more frequently to visit my Son in the Blessed Sacrament? Why are you driven by your laziness, not going to visit Him when He is waiting day and night?" (last message of the Virgin to Conchita, Nov. 13th, 1965). The Blessed Virgin reminds us that Jesus waits for us to speak with Him, to repair, and to console his Pierced Heart.



## The Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Sacred Heart of Jesus

It is very interesting how these apparitions in Garabandal are also related to the Hearts of Jesus and Mary.

On June 30th, 1961, Jacinta had a vision of the Sacred Heart. She described Him as dressed in white with a red stole; His Heart was luminous red, visible on the left side of His body, and it emitted white golden rays.

Jesus didn't speak to her, but His left hand was pointed to His Heart, and His right hand invited the child to go to Him. Jacinta narrated that Jesus didn't say anything, but He had a look of love and she felt He was saying to her: "I'm with you, and will always be with you."

In the last apparition of the Virgin Mary to Conchita on November 13th, 1965, the Blessed Mother said: "Remember what I said to you on your birthday that you will suffer much on earth? . . . I tell you this again. Have confidence in us and you will offer it with joy to Our Hearts, for the good of your brothers and sisters. In this way you will be more united to us." The Virgin continued: "Conchita, I don't come only for you. I come for all my children, with the desire to bring them closer to Our Hearts."

We should work, sacrifice and do every thing to fulfill the wishes of our Mother. Everything she desires is the same as the desires of Her Son, of God. They desire the salvation of the world, and we should all draw closer and love the Immaculate Heart of Mary who will take us directly to the Heart of Jesus.

The doctrine of spiritual life is condensed in the devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary: redemption, passion and Eucharist. It is a call that demands our concrete response.

We should pray for the reign of the Two Hearts in us and in the entire world.

**Garabandal Video about Padre Pio – 5 min**

## Conclusion

In the last apparition of the Virgin Mary to Conchita, Conchita said to the Virgin: "I am so happy when I see you. Why don't you take me with you now?" The Virgin responded: "Remember what I said to you . . .in order to present yourself before God you have to show your hands full of works done by you in favor of your brothers and for the Glory of God and, right now, your hands are empty."

The Virgin did not want to "take" Conchita because her hands were empty of good works: may we all meditate this phrase and receive from God the necessary grace to fill our hands and stay on earth to gather the merits we are permitted in this world with the satisfaction and joy of knowing we have done the will of God.

The Virgin Mary comes for all humanity and for all her children, and she has all of us under her mantle. She loves all of us and she desires our salvation. The warning will be sent by God so that no one will doubt the miracle and so that the miracle will have the maximum response possible from the people; the miracle is the last effort to convert sinners and avoid, in all ways possible, the punishment from heaven.

The essence of the Virgin's messages is summarized in the idea of centering our lives in the fulfillment of our duties. Each one of us, according to our state in life and condition, should repent for our faults and make an effort to be perfect. This perfection requires effort, sacrifice, and carrying our cross with joy.

This is the idea of penance referred to in the messages. Also, Lucia from Fatima eloquently clarified this after the locutions from Our Lord: "The sacrifices Our Lady asks from us are not extraordinary; the sacrifices Our Lady asks from her children are simply the fulfillment of our duties, each one of us according to our state and condition.

From an article written by Jose Maria Sanchez Ventura about suffering:

*"To Our Lady: We live in a valley of tears. But I know these tears are not a symbol of bitterness, but rather the price of happiness. Men sometimes forget that You also cried, that the thorns of pain also penetrated your Virginal flesh without blemish. We forget that with your tears You cooperated in the work of redemption of*

*Your Son, and we, with our tears, are to clean the dirt of so many nearsighted looks in order to reach the pure vision of God.*

*"Suffering is the fountain of wisdom among men and of grace before God. Suffering is the thorn of the rose, the price of health, the contrast to happiness, the peace of the war, the tribute of grace, the security of redemption. To suffering we owe all that is good in men, all that gives sense to life. To suffering we owe piety, heroism, virtue because underneath the flagellation of this master it has produced all progress in men.*

*"Yes, "happy fault" was the tragedy of our fallen nature, happy suffering will also be ours, if by offering it in recompense for so many weaknesses will lead us to the way of perfection.*

*"That is why, My Lady I know my offering is not sad, and the flowers of my anguish do not cover the beauty of this day of celestial fulfillment. I know that among all my efforts to obtain a dignified, pleasing homage for you, none will please you more than the offering of my sufferings. I also know that life has no sufferings for those who understand with time its significance.*

*"And because in the eternal battle of the thorn and the rose, this teaching is not rejected, but it is in magnificent harmony of what is contrary. I hear and admire the lesson of the rose: Suffering also gives joy; suffering is not to cry; this is not suffering. Suffering is not to step on the thorns of the rosebush with rebelliousness. It is to conquer the difficulties and bless the thorns with a kiss!"*

We have to have faith and confidence in Jesus and Mary who are carrying out the will of God in this world offended by sin. This is the design from God for the Virgin Mary to come to the world in order to help His children.

The Virgin loves us and desires to present us to the Merciful Father. The warning, the miracle, and the punishment were revealed, but our Mother does not want us to live in fear. On the contrary She desires that we truly live the messages. Praying (especially the Holy Rosary), fasting, wearing the scapular, frequent Eucharist, confession and reflection on the Passion of Christ will obtain the graces from God we need to avoid sin and be converted into true Christians, holy Christians on the path to Eternal Life.

#### Message Doctrinally Sound

Bishop Eugenio Beitia, one of the former bishops of Santander, issued a decree on July 8, 1965, in which he refused to recognize the supernatural character of the apparitions at Garabandal. However, in that same decree, he acknowledged the doctrinal integrity of the Garabandal message: "we point out, however, that we have not found anything deserving of ecclesiastical censorship or condemnation either in the doctrine or in the spiritual recommendations that have been publicized as having been addressed to the faithful, for these contain an exhortation to prayer and sacrifice, to Eucharistic devotion, to veneration of Our Lady in traditional praiseworthy ways, and to holy fear of God offended by our sins. They simply repeat the common doctrine of the Church in these matters."

#### Rosary Message and Renewal of Private Prayer

Bishop Beitia mentions "an exhortation to... veneration of our Blessed Lady in traditional praiseworthy ways" as part of the spiritual recommendations of Garabandal. He is apparently referring to the rosary message of Garabandal. Now this is not part of what could be termed the official or formal messages, those given by the Blessed Virgin, either directly, as in 1961, or through Saint Michael, as in 1965.

But the broader message of Garabandal definitely does involve an exhortation to that traditional Marian prayer, the rosary. The Blessed Virgin took the pains to teach the girls how to say it properly, that is, very slowly and attentively. She also made them recite it during every apparition and she commanded them to recite it daily.

## Renewal of Rosary and Private Prayer

### Informal Message

These specific instructions for the renewal of private prayer, and many other things which the Blessed Virgin told the children during the numerous apparitions and locutions (interior voices or messages communicated interiorly and without any accompanying vision), comprise what could be called the informal, but truly authentic message of Garabandal.

### Private Messages

Many of the messages delivered by Our Lady were of a purely private nature. Some were words of enlightenment or comfort directed to people who came to the village with personal problems. Others were statements that revealed the hidden thoughts or actions of visitors, some of whom were doubting priests. The Blessed Virgin told Conchita that the great American apostle of Garabandal, Joey Lomangino, would recover his sight on the day of the great miracle. She also told Conchita and her three friends other things of this kind.

### Divine Commands in Times of Spiritual Crisis

The messages given on the occasion of apparitions do not involve new doctrine. The content of our faith can know no increase. Divine revelation came to a close with the death of the last apostle. The messages of apparitions are divine commands telling us what to do in times of spiritual crisis. In this regard it is interesting to note that the message of Garabandal warned us in advance of the things that we should hold to and that were soon to be the object of direct or indirect attack in the Church: Mary, the rosary, the Eucharist, sin, penance and repentance, meditation on the passion (which gives us our insight into sin and the role of penance and reparation). Her request for prayers for priests and members of the hierarchy who are on the road to perdition is particularly prophetic and significant.

### Great Miracle Yet to Come

The Garabandal event is not yet over. Its climax will be a great miracle that shall convince everyone of the authenticity of Our Lady's visits to this remote Spanish mountain town. Conchita tells us about this in her diary in the following words:

The Blessed Virgin advised me of a great miracle, saying that God, Our Lord, would perform it through her intercession. Just as the chastisement will be very, very great, in keeping with our deserts, so too, the miracle will be extremely great, in keeping with the needs of the world.

### Kissed Objects and Prodigies

The kissing of objects started early in the apparitions, but it was considered so vital by the Blessed Virgin that she made it the principal object of her very last visit at Garabandal on November 13, 1965, and she told Conchita in advance that she would come for that purpose. "It was to be a special apparition," Conchita writes, "to kiss religious objects that would be distributed afterwards, for they have great importance." Conchita has written a report of this apparition.

## **Attitude of the Church**

There have been several statements from the various bishops of Santander since the start of the apparitions—all have refused to admit the divine origin of the events at Garabandal. Although Rome has steadfastly left the matter of the apparitions in the hands of the local Bishops, it has nevertheless shown a personal interest in them.

Conchita was called to Rome by Cardinal Ottaviani and went there in January of 1966. She visited the Holy Office and spent two and a half hours there in a very cordial interview. A few days after this visit, she was received privately by the Pope, who during his conversation with her said: "I bless you, and with me the whole Church blesses you." This cannot be interpreted as approval of Garabandal, but it is not without significance.

Also, there have been a number of private statements relative to Garabandal that have emanated from high places in the eternal city. Although none of them would warrant saying that Rome has approved the apparitions, they do indicate that Church authorities there are much more open to Garabandal than Santander has been up to now, and that they do not consider the matter closed because of statements that have been issued by Santander.