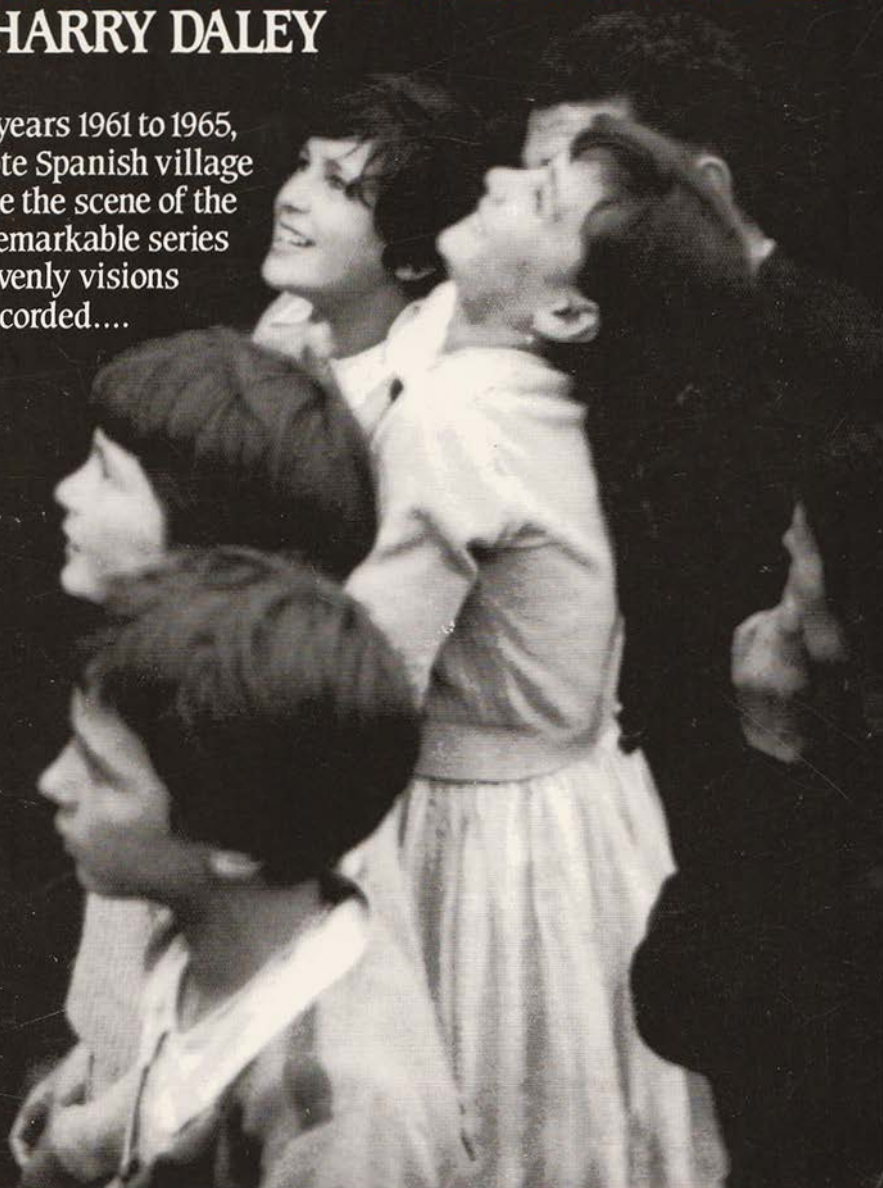


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MIRACLE AT GARABANDAL

BY HARRY DALEY

In the years 1961 to 1965,
a remote Spanish village
became the scene of the
most remarkable series
of heavenly visions
ever recorded....



- [Preface](#)
- [Chapter 1 - Meeting Conchita Gonzales](#)
- [Chapter 2 - Conchita Speaks at Garabandal](#)
- [Chapter 3 - Conchita Recalls Events](#)
- [Chapter 4 - Little Miracle](#)
- [Chapter 5 - The Final Apparition Recounted](#)
- [Chapter 6 - Trip to Fatima](#)
- [Chapter 7 - Keeping Promise/Conchita's Marriage](#)
- [Chapter 8 - The Interval Between Meetings](#)
- [Chapter 9 - Ten Years Later: Conchita Revisited](#)
- [Chapter 10 - Doubts and Denials](#)
- [Chapter 11 - Joe Lomangino and Fr. Ramon Andreu Speak](#)
- [Chapter 12 - Conchita Recalls Special Encounters](#)
- [Chapter 13 - Phenomena After The Apparitions](#)
- [Appendix](#)

MIRACLE AT GARABANDAL

by Harry Daley

“This is a beautiful book.”
—Mother Teresa of Calcutta



Mother Teresa with author.

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PREFACE

[Back to Top](#)

The desire to write the true story of Garabandal came upon me very strongly three years ago. I was then engaged as a stunt coordinator for one of the worst Hitler stories ever told. The television movie, starring Vanessa Redgrave, was entitled *Playing for Time*. It told of the horrors of prison camps in Auschwitz. All the world witnessed this madness emanating from one man's voice. The movie sets were so real-looking; the small prison barracks, the Nazi uniforms, the ovens, the prison uniforms, the actresses and the actors. It was hell recreated. Many mornings it took all I had to get to work.

Yet there was a story I knew of that was just the opposite. One that said, love each other, help each other, and live better lives. I never thought then that I would one day be writing it but, since I am, I will write it truthfully so that, if you need to know about Garabandal, you will have a book to read and refer to in the future. That need will be especially felt if the events told about in these pages come to pass and the great Miracle takes place.

Atheist, Catholic, Jew, Moslem, Protestant: we are all included in these events. Reading this book certainly will not harm anyone and, what's more, in some cases it may be enlightening. The future may find us wanting to be better people. The atheist may no longer be one if the predicted events take place. If they do not, we will all end up scratching our heads and wondering what could have caused such bizarre happenings to four young children in the small village of Garabandal in Spain over twenty years ago.

As you read you will understand why I say that faith smiled on my introduction to the subject as it now hopefully does on yours. As the executive producer of a documentary film about the subject, I walked through the place where the events actually occurred. I was necessarily seeking the best points of view to shoot from. That in itself is not unique, but being accompanied by one of the visionaries and having her explain what happened at each site is. Here is her story in her words and, for all of us, an awaited Miracle.

H.D.

February, 1983.

Dear Reader:

It is my ardent desire, because I believe it is Our Mother's too, that through the reading of this book you may learn more deeply to love and let yourself be loved by Our Mother, who has cared for us and continues to look for our good.

Let us ask God Our Lord for the grace to follow the true light through the teachings of Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II, who is another gift from Our Lord to lead us by the direct path towards our salvation, our end and our beginning, to the boundless happiness of being with God and the Most Holy Virgin. I believe this is the reason Our Saving Mother has come so many times to ask of us sacrifice, penance, and prayer. And above all, to go as often as possible before the Blessed Sacrament to listen to Him and be filled with his love and grace, to thus be able to follow our path with the sufferings we need to reach heaven.

And now I am going to ask you for something: that you and I do our utmost to abandon ourselves in the love of the Most Holy Virgin, so that it is she who acts in us and then whoever looks at us will see her.

United in prayer,

Conchita

P.S. Pray for me.

Chapter 1

MEETING CONCHITA GONZÁLEZ

[Back to Top](#)

On most film sets someone was always trying to pull me to the side and speak to me for one reason or another. Generally it was not in regard to the movie we were shooting but rather, since I was a stunt coordinator, it would be some stunt player making his bid for the next movie being planned. After a while this became a nuisance, because most films required only a couple of stunt people — while at any given time at least twenty-five were looking for work.

On one such occasion, however, the person did not ask anything about this or any other film. He was not a stunt man, but an actor in the film. He was preoccupied with a conversation a group of us had had the day before concerning different types of paranormal happenings: ghosts, UFOS and other things of that nature. I didn't know the fellow personally.

"Listen, excuse me," he said. "Yesterday I overheard your conversation and I was wondering if you ever heard of Garabandal."

"Gara-what?" I asked.

"Garabandal. It's a town in Spain where apparitions took place, with a great message of love and peace for the world."

"No, I never have," I admitted.

"Well, it's a very interesting story," he went on. "It was happening right up until seven years ago, from 1961 to 1965. Some children in Spain were visited by an angel and a lady from heaven."

At that point I started looking at this fellow a little more closely. I was sure that I was dealing with some kind of eccentric. Nonetheless, I was smiling as I sized him up very carefully, all the while hoping that someone else would come along to see me. He must have sensed my discomfort. With a large smile, he said, "I know it sounds strange. I thought so myself when I first heard it, but most of these happenings have been recorded in pictures, even on film."

The conversation ended quickly when someone called me to say that the director wanted to see me. I welcomed the opportunity to leave this man smiling to himself. Later in the day he walked back over to me and gave me a slip of paper, saying, "Here's the phone number of a lady here in New York who has a film about Garabandal. She will show it to you if you are ever interested." That is all I recall of the chain of events that led eventually to my calling that number.

The lady lived on the east side of Manhattan, somewhere around Thirty-fourth Street. (Our hostess was Margie González — no relation to Conchita.) Then in her mid-forties, she was a most unforgettable character to anyone who met her because there was absolutely no doubt in her mind as to the authenticity of the apparitions. She impressed me in every way as a grand lady.

Her apartment was very neat but quite small. The six people who accompanied me, along with three of her neighbors who were also present, as well as the sixteen-millimeter projector and a large screen made the small room seem even smaller. The sound track was somewhat rough, penetrating to my ears. The only face I could see clearly as we watched and listened was my wife Agnes. She seemed very intent, absorbing every word.

The film depicted several of the events that occurred in Garabandal. It showed how the children (four girls) would go into ecstasy (trance). During these ecstasies they were able to perform unexplainable feats, such as lifting each other as if weightless in order to kiss their heavenly visitor. Their heads would snap back almost in the wink of an eye when going into ecstasy. Then, with their heads lifted up, they would walk very rapidly, on terrain where others had a very hard time simply picking their steps. (These walks were referred to as ecstatic "marches.")

When the film finished there was an awkward silence. No one seemed to know what to say. Since I was the one who called to see the film, I felt obligated to break the ice. "Well, that was most interesting," I said. My words were obviously taken as a cue. People started for the door. Someone said he had to go down and put a coin in the meter. Everyone but my wife and me beat a hasty exit.

As we stood alone with our hostess, somewhat lost for words, my mind was relaying the message that something was wrong. All of us had come by taxi; there was no parked car in need of a coin for the meter. I said the only thing I could think of as I handed her my business card. "Thank you very much. I enjoyed the film. If there is anything I can ever do for you, give me a call." When we turned to leave, I remember seeing this very short lady now standing freely in the room that minutes ago had seemed cramped. She looked like a small child whom no one wanted to play with.

Downstairs in front of the apartment building I found my friends in different states of hysterical laughter. Some couldn't even explain what they found so funny. Their comments were varied, but they all agreed it was "senseless." A Jewish friend, Ken, was the first to speak up. "At least the rabbis are not going to hell!" He was referring to a part of the message of these apparitions which stated, "Many cardinals, many bishops and many priests are on the road to perdition." The second comment came from my wife, the mother of six children, a very hardworking and religious woman. "According to what I have heard," she said, "I must be going to hell." Then my long-time friend John added, "Well, at least we will have time to clean up our act once we see the Warning."

Some months went by and one day our hostess called me and asked if I would like to meet Conchita González, one of the girls who had experienced the apparitions. Conchita was often referred to

as the main visionary, a term she dislikes. She is the only one of the visionaries who knows the date of the promised Miracle. It was the hope of our hostess that Conchita would consent to appear in a new documentary film, in which she could tell the story of the events in her own words. The film would be used by centers that had opened throughout the world dedicated to spreading the messages of Garabandal. My little lady friend must have sensed somehow that I really felt that these apparitions had credibility. I concluded that my friends, who were professionals in the film business, were overly critical because the film was so roughly made. Still, I was in no hurry to get involved too deeply at this time.

There were several reasons for caution on my part. First of all, I was thirty years old and enjoying a high point in my film career. Money was coming in at a steady pace. Very seldom did I actually have to do the stunts; I was coordinating in most cases. Certainly there was no religious discipline in my life. I grew up in a family of mixed faiths — Lutheran, Methodist and Catholic. One of my earliest memories was of one person in the family not talking or bothering with another relative because of our religious differences. A couple of cousins of mine married spouses of the Jewish faith. None of the clan spoke to them. It was scrambled eggs, not an omelet, because nothing blended. One aunt, whom I really enjoyed, used to say, "None of you better visit on Friday. There's no way that I'll serve fish." My godmother married a Jew, Bob, who was really a great person. He once asked my father to draw him a map of the safe Brooklyn streets that he could travel after the marriage.

It may seem trivial in retrospect, but it was the cause of much bitterness then. They carried it right through to the end. I remember the wakes — when a Catholic was laid out there were kneelers in front of the casket. Of course, the Protestant relatives wouldn't kneel. The reverse was true when a Protestant relative died: though there would be no kneelers, the Catholic relatives would kneel anyway. At one of the Catholic wakes, I heard one uncle whisper to the others, "They'll have to kneel when they get to heaven!" Almost as if it was gospel.

In June 1972 I met Conchita González. This was a very pleasant day in my life. Conchita was far from being any of the strange things I had pictured. I really cannot say what type of person I was expecting to meet. In two words, perhaps "odd" and "spooky." She was nothing of the sort. In her early twenties, Conchita was a beautiful, enjoyable, humorous young lady. She was very intelligent and the first person I ever met who listened with such intensity. You could actually "hear her listening." Her personality was almost heavenly. There were many people around her and she was equally attentive to them. Although my little friend was hoping that Conchita would agree to do a film documentary, it seemed she would never have the chance to ask. But she did. On Conchita's trips to the States the people who had been following the events since the beginning (1961) were all excited about having her here. Some of them seemed to me to be overly protective. They were even picking out a husband for her. My decision was made right then. If I did get involved in any way, I resolved not to include anything other than Conchita's accounts of these events.* *(As my conversations with Conchita go back over ten years, at some points I have had to consult the actual sound track from the movie; at other points, Conchita's own diary. In preparing this book, our goal has been accuracy. Conchita concedes to some difficulty in recalling certain details and suggested her diary was the best source. For other bits of help, I extend many thanks to St. Joseph Publications of Cleveland, Ohio, as well as Father Joseph A. Pelletier, A.A. Special thanks also to Bishop Francisco Garmendia, Vicar of Spanish Affairs for the Archdiocese of New York, and Father Pablo Rodriguez, Our Lady of Loretto, Hempstead, N.Y. for graciously giving assistance with research, as well as the translation of the necessary Spanish documents.)

All in all, the meeting with Conchita was very enjoyable. She agreed to do a documentary about the events, provided she could get permission. She would inform us upon her return to Spain. In August of that year she wrote to me that it was okay to proceed. She said that she would meet me in Madrid for the trip to Garabandal.

Chapter 2

CONCHITA SPEAKS
AT GARABANDAL[Back to Top](#)

Upon arriving in Madrid, I was met by Conchita and a lady friend of hers who had rented a car and driver. We set off for Garabandal, which is located in the Cantabrian Mountains, several hundred miles north of Madrid. The drive up to San Sebastián, the province in which Garabandal is located, is one of the most pleasant auto trips you can imagine. The roads are good and the scenery quite breathtaking. Periodically, as you pass a castle on a hill, you can feel its old history in your soul.

Once inside the region of Garabandal the travel is uphill all the way. The village sits on top of what seems to be one of the tallest mountains in the area. I remember thinking it would not be a long trip at all to heaven for anyone up there. When we reached our destination I was very tired. The young ladies went to Conchita's mother's home for the evening. I spent the night at her brother's. Next day we would meet again and she would give me a tour of the area.

Rising early the next morning, I went for a walk. The entire town is made of stone. The houses and streets seem to blend into each other. All the houses seem to be the same size, yet the exterior structures are very different. The town probably could best be described as a cluster of homes just dropped together on this mountaintop, jutting out and above the rugged terrain. It proved somehow, in a sure but simple way, that man will survive as the highest form of creation.

I stood in the center of the town looking up to the hilliest section where some pine trees are situated. This is the spot where many of the apparitions took place and where the great promised Miracle will leave a sign for all mankind to see. I didn't venture up to this area because the only way up was by walking in a ravine filled with rocks and I was having enough of a problem walking on the rough unpaved streets.

The town was now coming to life as people left their homes to work on their farms, which provided the common livelihood of the region. Oddly enough, though miles away from any building over two stories high, the townspeople seemed more like city people than rural dwellers. I had the feeling that I was in a little neighborhood, a section of any large city. The people seemed as rugged as their little neighborhood and very friendly to visitors, so long as the latter didn't get out of line.

I was just leaving the church when a smiling Conchita came down the block to greet me. We were off for the trip.

We ascended the rocky ravine that I had avoided earlier; Conchita referred to it as the Calleja. She said it was there in the Calleja where it all began on June 18, 1961.

I was twelve years old then and I was with my three friends, Mari Cruz [age eleven], Mary Loli [age twelve], and Jacinta González [age twelve]. We heard a loud noise like thunder. Because we had just finished taking some apples from a tree that didn't belong to

us, we felt we had made the Devil happy and our guardian angels sad. We began throwing small stones to our left side, with all our strength, for this side was where the Devil is said to be. After that we began to play marbles. Suddenly, a very beautiful figure appeared to me, shining brilliantly without hurting my eyes. Then the other girls saw him. We froze for a moment and when we got our thoughts back, we ran toward the church, very frightened.*

*(I was amazed at this, thinking, how could anyone run on these rocks? It was barely possible for me to walk.)

I can still see it in my mind. The figure was an angel, very strong in build, with a very young face, like a boy of nine years or so, yet he looked so masculine. He had, you would say, a brilliance about him too beautiful to explain and a large, almost transparent pink-reddish set of wings.

Actually, they were not exactly wings. They were not attached to his body. They were more like a halo would be, like a light gleaming from behind him. He wore a long blue tunic. He had dark eyes and tan skin. Very beautiful.

Since we had told some friends that night of what had happened, by the next day everyone we met was asking us if we really saw an angel. Except for a few kind people, most of the people thought we were making it up. I was supposed to be home early the night it happened, but I didn't get home until nine-thirty. My mother [Aniceta] was angry with me. When I told her that I had seen an angel, she said, "Is that all? On top of coming home late, you come home saying all these things."

"But it is true," I said, "I have seen an angel."

Some of the remarks from the townspeople were: "It could have been a large bird, since it was dark." "Maybe some little boy surprised them." "Maybe they were dreaming." Everyone had his own idea about things. It was a day on which people talked about nothing else.

The parish priest, Father Valentín Marichalar, came by my house to speak with me that very day. I was outside thinking of how beautiful the vision of last night had been. He already had questioned the other girls. Father seemed to become very nervous when he spoke. "Conchita, be honest. What did you see last night?" He listened very carefully as I explained everything to him and then he said: "Well, if you see him tonight ask him who he is and why he is coming. See what he answers."

Since all four of us now had told him exactly the same thing, he was more and more impressed. He told me that he would wait a few days to see what happened. If we continued to see the angel, he would then consult the bishop.

Later that day the four of us went back to the Calleja. Some of the boys followed us and were being very fresh, teasing us, some were even throwing stones. Other people also followed us to see what would happen. Nothing did happen that day. I was very sad going to bed that night. When I was saying my prayers, I heard a voice that said, "Don't be troubled. You will see me again."

On my way to school the next morning I learned that my friends Mary Loli, Jacinta

and Mari Cruz also received the same message. "You will see me again." We were all filled with joy. In the afternoon we all met in the Calleja and prayed the Rosary. Again, nothing was happening. We finished praying, but as we stood to leave, we were surrounded by a very brilliant light that frightened us. We all screamed with fear. But, once again, there was no angel. However, we would see the angel the following evening. And other nights during the month of June.

The people who witnessed us go into a state of what was referred to as ecstasy said our heads would instantly snap upward. At times we would crash very hard to our knees. I knew or felt nothing of this. Some people would actually prick our skin with needles during these states. Although I did not realize it then, later I would see puncture and bruise marks on my skin.

When the angel appeared we bombarded him with questions, including the one suggested by our parish priest. He never answered, just maintained his beautiful smile. The one thing that did change was that, after a few days, he would appear with writing under his feet. We could not understand it, but would learn later of its meaning. He would speak to us on July 1.

By now [July 1, 1961] the town had put up safety barriers. I guess there were as many as five hundred people. Many of them were praying along with us. When the angel appeared he was smiling and then said: "I have come to announce to you a visit by the Virgin, under the title of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, who will appear to you tomorrow, Sunday."

We all said at one time, "Let her come right away." He also told us that the Virgin would explain the writing under his feet. He laughed with us and we joked now about our fear during the previous appearances. The visit seemed like seconds to us. Later we were informed that it lasted two hours. On parting, he told us that he would see us the next day with the Virgin. After this, we went as usual to the sacristy to answer questions as was our practice now. The night passed without further event.

The next day, Sunday, was very busy. Many people including religious were now in the village. Cars were parked everywhere. People we had never seen before were offering us gifts. Everything seemed strange. Around six in the evening we were near the spot in the Calleja when Our Blessed Mother appeared with an angel on each side. One was St. Michael and the other St. Gabriel. The angels were dressed exactly alike and looked like twins. Next to the angel who stood to the right of the Virgin we saw an eye of great size. It appeared to be the eye of God. But I don't remember any more. Many of the occurrences are not clear now. When I saw the film of the apparitions, it was as if I were watching someone else.

I have often been asked about my feelings. They were feelings of joy, which cannot be explained in human terms. They are just too wonderful. I felt as if the Virgin had been away on a long trip and returned. She had been a friend, a good, good friend, just like a mother. She was like no other woman. She wore a long white dress covering her feet, with a blue mantle and a crown of golden stars. Her hands were open. On the right wrist a brown

scapular hung. Her hair was dark chestnut brown and wavy. Her face was oval-shaped, with fine features, beautiful full lips and a delicate Roman-type nose. Her skin color was lighter than the angel's but yet dark — it was different. Her voice was too lovely to describe.

When asked if I would consider her to be in a glorified state, I answer simply, no. She was like you or me here, very natural, just extremely beautiful and graceful. That day we talked much with the Virgin, as she did with us. We told her everything. How we walked to the pasture, that we were tanned, that we took hay to the barns. She laughed. We told her about so many things! She prayed the Rosary with us and then told us that she would see us on Monday.

Here was one of those great moments when Conchita's face radiated such a glow from total recall — exactly the opposite of the strange look of pain in her eyes as she tried to recall some forgotten event.

When the vision was over, many people rushed to us excitedly asking what had been said. I remember that some people believed us and the others didn't.

We were elated — a very happy day because we saw the Virgin for the first time and would see her again. Once again we were taken to the sacristy for questions. This is how Sunday, July 2, ended. Our schoolmistress [Serafina Gómez] was very emotional the following day. She was crying and kissed us, saying how lucky we were. Everyone was talking about it. It seemed not only our families but everyone we met that day believed very much. Many of the people became quite spiritual.

At this point Jacinta González, another of the visionaries, joined Conchita. As they spoke together in their native Spanish there was something uncannily similar in both girls' eyes. I have since met all four girls and not only are they all very attractive physically, they all have a deep inner beauty, simplicity and sensitivity.

The film crew came moments behind Jacinta. I excused myself and left to get the crew set up. My head was spinning from the casualness of the way Conchita talked and walked around the actual spot where the heavenly visits took place. During the unloading of equipment and the settling in of the crew, I did experience an inner peace. This peace was only to last until suppertime. Now, over a decade later, I realize it was the only peace I was to know whenever circumstances involved my life with Garabandal.

Feelings of uneasiness can be brought about by people who like to read things into a situation. To me the events at Garabandal are no mystery. It could not be simpler. Either they happened or they didn't. The promised events will prove that. Conchita herself waits for the promised Miracle. She simply lives the messages while waiting for the Miracle and the approval of the Church.

Supper was served family style around a large table. The crew was from Madrid and, knowing some people nearby, they ventured out for the evening. So I found myself alone. There were nine other guests for dinner and the conversation evolved into a "can you top this" sort of relating of supernatural happenings. Some of the guests got carried away, discussing everything odd in the world — from the Devil to Hosts raining from the sky. I finally gained enough nerve to get up from the table and retire to my room for the night.

I had some literature to settle in with and was interested in something I had heard concerning the

apparitions in Garabandal: calls. It seemed that the girls would always receive three Warning calls. They were explained to me by some fellow who seemed to be learned about the apparitions. The girls would hear an inner voice — not with their ears, but somehow bodily. The first was a slight joy; the second more, and the third a great joy. Now these calls came at all hours, while the girls were in different places, yet they would always meet together at the same time.

As I read, thoughts rushed restlessly through my mind. I recalled the conversation earlier that evening. For instance, one woman was so preoccupied with talk about the Devil that I was glad of the heavy research I had done on the subject. I summoned the words of St. Teresa of Avila: "I don't understand these fears; the Devil, the Devil, when we can say God, God and make the Devil tremble."

I concluded that anyone involved in a private revelation would be wise to wait for a decision by the Church. I understand now why such things take so much study. I decided that I would submit my work when finished to the Church for approval. I thought back to the night when I first saw the film and to the man who had approached me on the movie set. I recalled that he said that the message of Garabandal was one of love and peace for all the world. Yet I couldn't remember answering him except to agree to see a film on the apparitions. Could it have been as simple as that? Then I had the advantage of meeting Conchita personally and finding a perfectly honest and beautiful person.

Through the documentary, I thought other people would be able to see her and see that she is for real. I guess it would take an entire book to call in all the thoughts of that night. But there was one question that I couldn't answer. How, with words like "Eucharist," "Rosary," "the Virgin Mary," et cetera, can there be a message for the entire world? Some time later I asked Conchita why, if the message was for the entire world, would these words be used. She looked at me, smiled as if to say what a silly question, and answered, "I guess for the same reason she spoke in Spanish." The next morning came quickly.

Chapter 3

CONCHITA RECALLS EVENTS

[Back to Top](#)

We were setting up for the first shots in front of Conchita's house. Her mother came out to meet us. She did not speak English. Conchita introduced us. She was extremely humble and charming.

I had really wanted some insight into Conchita's behavior as a youngster. What came out of the conversation was mainly their love for one another and that they enjoyed being together. Conchita said jestingly, "Wasn't I an ideal child?" Her mother, making a strangling gesture, said, "Sometimes I would have liked to wring your neck. It took Our Heavenly Mother to make you obedient."

Even though it was very early, we now had a group of children off to the side watching us. They were very well behaved. I wasn't sure if it was because of their interest in us and the equipment or because of Conchita's presence. It turned out to be neither. Conchita, when the chance came, was right over with them, fooling around, enjoying herself. In a very short time they were about their business of

playing a street game. Once again reminding me of city kids without the luxury of money for other forms of entertainment, they were making up street games.

They played with a soccer ball. Conchita explained that things were exactly as they had been ten years earlier when she was their age. For the rest of that morning I could not help but notice an air of intrigue about the villagers who passed by. I learned later that it was sort of a built-in protection for Conchita.

They all knew that she was back home but tried not to draw attention to the fact. Many tourists would have swarmed to her. This did happen the next day and it became impossible to get any shooting done other than scenery. It actually worked to our advantage because wherever Conchita was there was the crowd, allowing us to shoot other locations undisturbed.

The shot we were after that morning was in the side street near Conchita's house. This was the site of what Conchita referred to as the "little miracle." As we walked around the area in search of a good shooting location, I chatted with Conchita. I was telling her about the strange conversation of some of the people I had had dinner with the night before. She then shared an amusing story with me.

Since the apparitions began, all types of people have come to this place. Some very holy, some just curious, and some very poor souls.

When I told her that I was afraid to walk up to the pines after hearing some of these poor souls' stories, she roared laughing. Then she told me to be kind to people and added, still smiling:

Once back in 1963 or 1964, a man came to the village claiming to be the Pope. He drove in with great style in a big limousine with a few uniformed bodyguards. He wore a spotless white cassock, white skullcap, the ring of a bishop and all. He said that he was the Pope chosen by God and that he saw God and the Virgin. He called himself Clement XV. At first, some people were excited by his presence, but he was eventually found out. He wanted to see us, we soon learned, so we went into hiding. He left town quickly, after someone went to the mayor.

This somewhat humorous interruption behind us, it was time to get back to business. A member of the crew handed me my notes.

My goodness, I pondered, where to start with over four years of apparitions: The Virgin? The Infant Jesus? Angels? The visit to the real Pope? The visit with Padre Pio? The list went on and on. With unfailing consistency, three questions vied in my mind for immediate attention. However, I was saving these and would, until the very end. Actually, it would be ten years later before I asked them. But, for now, I concentrated on the "inner calls." As Conchita had already explained, the calls were feelings of joy, which would occur at three different times.

The first call would prepare us. The last and the greatest of these feelings would be the final summons. When our parish priests was informed of these calls, he agreed with the idea of separating us. Only a half hour after we were separated, we received the second call, and all of us headed for the Calleja.

As soon as we reached the boarded-up section [cuadro], the Blessed Virgin appeared

with the Infant Jesus.* *(The girls always called him Baby Jesus, but the Virgin — according to Conchita — never told them he was.) The Baby smiled lovingly at us also. We picked up pebbles and were playing a game of hide-the-pebble. I placed them in my hair and Mary Loli in her sleeves. Jacinta offered them to him. He didn't take them. He just smiled more than ever. The blessed Mother took these pebbles and some objects that our parents and other people had given us to present. She kissed them all, telling us to give them to other people. Mari Cruz said to him, "If you wish, I'll give you some caramels that someone brought me." He didn't answer anything. We talked and played a lot that day. Then at the end the Blessed Virgin said, "Remain with God and with me also. Tomorrow you will see me again."

On the next day there was a very important apparition. We were in church when we received our first inner call. At the time, we were saying the Rosary. At the conclusion of the Rosary, we received the second inner call. We immediately began to run to the Calleja. The people were also running after us. Mari Cruz and I made it to the cuadro. Mary Loli and Jacinta did not. The Blessed Virgin was smiling as usual and said, "Do you know the meaning of the sign that was beneath the angel?" † †(Here or any time that I have heard Conchita give the message, she would only do so in Spanish.)

Once again, we answered together, "No, we don't."

"It had a message that I am going to give you in order that you may announce it publicly on the eighteenth of October. It is as follows: We must make many sacrifices, perform much penance, and visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently. But, first, we must lead good lives. If we do not, a chastisement will befall us. The cup is already filling up and, if we do not change, a very great chastisement will come upon us."

We now stood up and headed for the pines. On the way, I asked Conchita to explain penance and sacrifices and leading good lives. Her eyes seemed to reach back.

For penance someone once gave us these sorts of belts to wear around our waists. ‡ ‡(A cilice [a wire-type belt with sharp metallic points to irritate the skin.] It was a priest who gave them to Conchita, Mary Loli and Jacinta, but not Mari Cruz, because he felt that she was smaller and frailer than the others. Reportedly, Jacinta's mother would not allow her to wear the belt. It was designed for discomfort and the girls wiggled in it to draw the Virgin's attention. Conchita admits that the Virgin said, "This is not what I mean by penance." See further references to penance in Chapter 10.) During this apparition, we were pulling at our waists so that the Virgin would realize that we were uncomfortable. The Virgin told us to take the belts off, that we should do our chores and accept the problems of everyday life.

I don't know what the Virgin meant. I understand it to mean that we should live life from moment to moment, offering everything to God. All people, in their families and in their jobs. Each one knows how to be good because I believe each person has his or her own conscience. God speaks to each one through his or her own conscience. I'm sure each person knows when he or she does something good or something bad.

The Virgin also reminded us very often about visiting the Blessed Sacrament. As a matter of fact even in her final apparition (November 13, 1965), the Virgin told me, "Conchita, why do you not go more often to visit my Son in the tabernacle?"

And the chastisement will be something very, very great, in keeping with what we

deserve. However, if the world changes, it will not come. I was shown it. I felt great fear, even though I was in ecstasy with the Virgin. But the Virgin has told me that Jesus will perform a great Miracle for the world first, so people can amend their lives. Before the great Miracle, he will send a purification, a loving Warning,* *(Conchita feels that the translation of the word in Spanish which represents "Warning" may not be an accurate one. She believes it should not threaten, so perhaps the word "preparation" would be more appropriate.) to prepare us.

The Warning that is to precede this great Miracle will be felt by everyone in the world. No matter where they are at that time, they will find themselves all alone, with their consciences before God. They will see all their sins and what their sins have caused, no matter what religious or nonreligious beliefs they have. Everyone will experience this at the same time. Yet everyone will have a different view because our sins are different. No one will be physically harmed, unless by shock. It will be only a Warning, like a purification before the Miracle. I don't know when this will occur, except that it will be before the Miracle.

She told me of the date when Jesus will perform the great Miracle. But I cannot say that until eight days before it will happen. Many times she told us secrets to tell the people who were there. But they were personal things to them. I really do not remember anything else at this time.

About the Miracle, the Virgin said that it will take place on a Thursday night at eight-thirty and this day will coincide with an event in the church and the feast day of a saint who is a martyr of the Eucharist. It will be visible to all the people in the village and surrounding mountains. The sick who are present will be cured and the nonbelievers will believe. It will be the greatest Miracle Jesus has performed for the world. There will not be the slightest doubt that it comes from God and that it is for the good of mankind. There will be a sign that remains for all time which will be able to be seen, photographed or televised, but not touched.

I can also add that it will happen between the eighth and the sixteenth of the month. This Miracle will be for everyone in the world. The Virgin also said that on the day after the Miracle a deceased priest's body (Father Luis Andreu) will be found to be incorrupt. The Virgin also spoke of a paralytic boy who would be healed on this day. Also, a blind man, Joe Lomangino, would be cured, and the Pope and Padre Pio would see the Miracle.†

†(Further information regarding the Miracle in Chapter 11. Padre Pio was a Capuchin Franciscan priest who bore the visible and painful wounds of the crucified Christ. He died in 1968 at the age of 81. Fr. Luis Andreu, age 36, died unexpectedly after visiting Garabandal.) (See Chapter 12.)

She taught us things in such a gentle way. She played with us and kissed us. People who saw us said that we would laugh with our whole bodies. The main thing was that we should be obedient to our superiors. She always told us to pray for priests. This was very difficult too understand, since to us in this small village we saw few priests and could not realize that they would need prayers.

She once showed me the ugliness of sin. It was horrible. Many times she would teach us prayers and songs. She was always happy. We have such a wonderful Mother in heaven.

The Virgin always spoke of obedience. Many times while in ecstasy we would go

into the church for prayer. The pastor issued a notice, given to him by his superiors, that forbade us to enter the church while in ecstasy. From that day on the Virgin never led us into the church. The Virgin told us that we should obey the Church above all. The Church always was considered above all to us here in Garabandal. Our village was one hundred percent Catholic. But through the years I have become more and more aware of the added importance of obedience that the Virgin taught us.

You know, early during the apparitions some people came who were Protestant. I had never met anyone who was a Protestant, at least to my knowledge. When I saw the Virgin I said to her, as if there was a spy in the village, "You know, there are some Protestants here." the Virgin replied, "They are all my children."

Many people of other faiths came to the village and some were converted to Catholicism. I remember a girl named Catherine who came with a friend out of curiosity. Once while Jacinta was in ecstasy this girl was hit by a glass of water. A priest had instructed Jacinta, "When you see the Virgin throw holy water at her, because if it's the Devil, it will leave." Jacinta, knowing it was not the Devil, but in order to obey the priest, threw a glass of water at the Virgin. The water fell on top of this girl. From that moment she wanted to convert to Catholicism. Catherine was from a wealthy family who offered her everything if she would not convert, but she did.

Another was a Protestant man (Máximo) who also came out of curiosity. He saw an ecstasy one night that greatly impressed him and he converted to Catholicism. Now he is a good practicing Catholic.

I was reminded, both in the apparitions and in the locutions, that the occurrences were not for me alone but for the entire world. My world, up to this time, was entirely Catholic. People of other faiths were new to me.

Conchita realized from my puzzled expression that some of the words she was using were also new to me — especially "locutions." I asked her about that.

The words were also new and strange to me. I remember during some of the investigation how surprised I was that they seemed to have a word for everything. Locution is something like the calls and the apparitions combined. Yet, at the same time, entirely different. It is very different. It is very difficult to describe in human terms. They are all accompanied with feelings of great joy and inner peace. While in the calls you hear nothing, but are as if led and guided by some heavenly means, in the apparitions you see and hear. In locutions you hear — not with your ears, but with your entire being. It is a completely beautiful experience. I really cannot explain it.

Once in a locution in church, while asking God for certain things, I heard Him answer me. I asked Him to give me a cross to bear. He replied, "Yes, I will give you the cross." "Why is the Miracle going to take place? To convert many people?" He answered, "To convert the whole world." "Will Russia be converted?" "Yes, she will be converted, and thus everybody will love our Hearts." "Will the chastisement come after that?" He did not answer. "Why do you come to my poor undeserving heart?" "The fact is, I have not come for you. I have come for everybody." "When the Miracle takes place, will it be thought that

I was the only one who saw the Virgin?" "By your sacrifices and your penance, I am allowing you to play a part in bringing about the Miracle." "Isn't it better that I be joined by the other girls in this role of intercession, or that you give it to none of us?" "No." "Will I go to heaven?" "If you love much and pray to our Hearts." "When will you give me the cross?" No answer. "What will I be?" No answer, but this: "Wherever you might be and whatever you might do, you will have much to suffer." "Will I die soon?" "You must remain on earth to help the world." "I am so little. I would not be of any help." "By your prayers and your suffering you will help the world." "When a person goes to heaven, is he dead when he goes?" "A person never dies." "Is St. Peter at the gate of heaven to receive us?" "No."

While I was engaged in this prayer or conversation with God, I felt as though I was outside the world. In this locution, prayers for priests were once again requested.

I interrupted Conchita to inquire whether this feeling of being outside of the world was the feeling of levitation.

No this wasn't; but I have seen some of the other girls in a state of levitation and people have witnessed me in such a state. I can only remember one time when I was in ecstasy that my entire body was raised as I stood upright. Later the people who were there told me that I was raised about twelve inches off the floor.

We had now reached the pines, the location of many of the apparitions. From this vantage point one is able to look down at the entire village — a village that in 1961 had seventy homes and a population of about five hundred people. It was hard to imagine this little town as the site of such miraculous happenings that began on June 18, 1961. I imagined that from this same point of view some eleven years earlier one would be able to look down and see no activity whatsoever as the people were out tending to the raising of their sheep and cattle and farming. But today was different. It was seven years since the last apparition and yet a number of tourists could be seen walking in and out of the little streets, coming up to the pines area from which we were now looking down, in search of some memories.

I felt a little bit of guilt because periodically, if I thought someone had spotted Conchita, I would block her from view in hopes that we would be able to continue with the conversation. I expressed to Conchita the guilt that I felt at what I was doing. Her response then was the same that I have heard many, many times since:

The Blessed Mother loves everyone equally. Some people ask me questions today as if I had an insight on what's happening in the world and I have absolutely none. They come out of respect to where the Virgin appeared and that's nice. But there is certainly no reason to see me, as I am not special.

Some time back, the people of my village were constantly giving me advice: do this, give up that. I thought how I would like to be in a hermitage, away from everyone, alone with God. That thought occurs to me now when people ask things that I cannot have any possible way of knowing. At times I would make believe that I was in ecstasy. Sometimes we all would, just to get away from people. I really love people, but I pray that they will just live the message while they are waiting for the Miracle.

I love Garabandal, but there is no way I can live here any longer. People are always coming. Most of them are very lovely and it hurts not to be able to talk with them all. I pray that they all understand that it means nothing at all to meet or talk with me. They would be so much better off sitting in church quietly and listening to God.

Conchita was smiling and seemed quite at ease as we talked, but certainly I realized how painful this questioning must be for her. I experienced some guilt, for here was a young girl at wits end with all that was on her mind. She would be moving to the United States, leaving a village and family she loved. The very place where Heaven came down to talk with her. She had, in her own opinion at this time, been charged with the spreading of Our Lady's messages. It was a difficult period in her life. I decided to try to get in another question before our scheduled shot. I asked Conchita to tell me the second message. I expected her eyes to light up at this opportunity to tell me all about it. Instead, that very serious look came into them and once again she spoke in Spanish. Conchita concentrated to recall most things, as I've stated; however, extra precaution was obvious when she gave these two messages, in order not to misquote the Virgin. She began:

The angel came and said [on behalf of the Virgin]: As my message on October 18, 1961, has not been complied with and has not been made known, I am advising you that this is the last one. Before, the cup was filling up, now it is overflowing. Many cardinals, many bishops and many priests are on the road to perdition and taking many souls with them. Less and less importance is being given to the Eucharist. You should turn the wrath of God away from yourself by your efforts. If you ask Him for forgiveness with a sincere heart, He will pardon you. I, your Mother, through the intercession of St. Michael the archangel, ask you to amend your lives. You are now receiving the last Warnings. I love you very much and do not want your condemnation. Pray to us with sincerity and we will grant your requests. You should make more sacrifices. Think about the passion of Jesus.

We started down the hill and as I pressed Conchita about the meaning of the message, she repeated: "I can only say what the Virgin said, not what she means." It seems impossible to think that, after visitations by the angels, apparitions of the Virgin Mary, locutions, witnessed levitations and witnessed miracles, this message of 1961 was not made known. I had not heard about it myself until 1970 when a stranger mentioned it to me. Conchita smiled and simply said that maybe I wasn't supposed to know until then.

What you are doing now is looking at all the positive aspects of the apparitions. You can't look at just the positive aspects because there were negative aspects also. For instance, the denials that enter into this. You mentioned witnessed levitations. You mentioned witnessed miracles. While it is true that these things happened and many cases were documented, I have no explanation as to why they occurred. The main reason for the apparitions was to give the world the messages. The messages sometimes get lost as people become involved in the sensationalism of the apparitions.

Chapter 4

LITTLE MIRACLE

[Back to Top](#)

Everything was now ready for us to shoot. Conchita's mother walks as the camera pans to the spot where, according to Conchita, the little miracle took place on July 18, 1962.

Do you know why I called it the little miracle? Because the Virgin said, "I'm going to perform a miracle that everyone will see, the sacred form on your tongue." I thought everyone could see it each time I went to communion, so I said, "That's not a miracle." She said that nobody could see it, only on this day. So, I called it the little miracle. The angel on that day came down and brought me the Host just as on other days. But on that day everyone saw it. Many priests, especially one who was a Franciscan, but I cannot remember his name. He could not believe or did not believe that it was the Sacred Host. He thought it was an illusion or some other thing. I cannot remember what now. He wanted to take the Host to see if it was real or fake, but he was afraid. So he left. Ten days later he came back, repenting his thoughts, and asked for pardon. There was a great change in him after that.

Also they used to take movies and pictures of many of the events. There was a doctor who was a Catholic but stated that he led a bad life. Another man who was very good. The doctor wanted to take a picture. He had a good camera with lights and all that stuff. However, at the moment he wanted to snap the picture the light bulbs blew out and the camera didn't work. The other man, however, without bulbs and just a very simple camera, took the pictures. After that the doctor was converted. And the other man felt great joy.

With regard to communion, the Virgin taught us the value and importance of the Eucharist. After the apparitions started we never missed a day of communion. When there wasn't a priest in town an angel would come down to give us communion. This happened approximately thirty or forty times. It has been reported that it happened on every occasion, but it was only when there wasn't a priest in town. At one point we were instructed by a priest to ask how it was that, since only a priest could consecrate the Hosts, the angel was administering us communion. We did ask and the Virgin said that the angel would come down and would take the Hosts already consecrated from the tabernacles on earth.

One day we had brought many objects to the Virgin to kiss while we were in ecstasy as was her practice. Among these objects was a very elegant powder case. I don't recall exactly but I remember that the people prior to going into ecstasy would bring things which would be put on the kitchen table. Someone wanted to remove the powder case because he or she just felt it was an object that should not be given to the Virgin to kiss. However, the very first object that Our Lady asked for, saying, "That belongs to my Son," was this very compact. It wasn't until later that we learned why.

In 1938, during the terrible Spanish Civil War, priests were being executed in the Red zone, and had to be hidden. The powder case had been used to take communion Hosts to various locations and to prisoners whom the Reds were holding captive before executing them. So in reality this powder compact acted as a pyx.* *(The little circular container in which the Eucharist is carried to the sick.)

The Virgin told me that Jesus will perform prodigies by means of the objects kissed

by her before and after the Miracle. And the person who uses these objects with faith will undergo his or her purgatory in life.

You ask what exactly she meant by that: miracles to be performed by these objects. I never interpret what the Blessed Virgin means. I simply state what the Virgin has said since very early, as early as the second apparition when she said, "Remain with God and me." People have been attributing different meanings into this. I've heard many, many different explanations. Once again, I just never interpret what the Virgin means. I simply state what she said. Perhaps her very words mean different things to different people. I am really not sure.

I know that a lady took one of these kissed objects, and a piece of the pine from the place where the Virgin appeared, to a little girl who was in a coma and expected to die. She had already been given the last sacraments. The little girl was completely cured between the night and the following morning. She is already married and has children and is completely normal.

And there were many cases of conversion, two that I recall right now. One was a chauffeur who ran an errand of some sort to the village for the people who employed him. During one of the ecstasies a medal was placed around his neck and he admitted that he was living . . . a life of sin and then after that occurrence he came back to the Church. Then there was the case of a lady dancer who was converted here at Garabandal from a life that she wasn't leading so well.

Chapter 5

THE FINAL APPARITION RECOUNTED

[Back to Top](#)

Conchita spent the next day with her family. The crew completed all the needed scenery shots while I walked around speaking with the townspeople and many tourists. I met some of the nicest people anyone would want to meet. One man, a medical doctor from Texas, was very well versed in all the Marian apparitions. He had a great expression: "I travel the world always quoting a Bible verse, Luke 1:28."*

*(The Angel announced the birth of Jesus.) I didn't know at the time that he was referring to his Rosaries.

I spoke with many witnesses of the apparitions and by the end of the day I was in awe of some of the facts I had heard, such as:

1. The Virgin kissed certain objects while the children were in ecstasy, sometimes over a hundred. Yet, with their eyes still skyward and in ecstasy, the girls returned the objects to their rightful owners. The children said that the Virgin directed them. They even put wedding bands on people correctly. Some people wore them on the right hand and some on the left.

2. The children often fell as the crowds pushed to be near them. One could hear their heads crash on the rocks, yet they would not be hurt. They would get up gracefully and continue to walk.

3. If their dresses went up owing to a fall, the dresses were seen mysteriously moving down so as not to expose the girls' upper legs.

4. One time several witnesses heard the children in ecstasy pleading with the Virgin to speak into a tape recorder to prove to the people that she was there. Several reliable witnesses said they heard a lovely voice on the tape say, "I will not speak." After this was played back a couple of times, the voice was heard no more.

5. Many people of religious orders came in disguise, but the girls would always know them. In some cases they were requested to give names and they did.

6. The girls would give many personal messages to people.

7. If one girl was in ecstasy and one was not, they could still talk to each other.

8. Many things had happened here in Garabandal and it wasn't only the four young girls who were talking about it.

9. My Texan friend told me that the girls, particularly Conchita, were interrogated quite often, even taken out of the village at times to be questioned.* *(These investigations were indeed many. The findings were both positive and negative. In many cases, the investigations were non-official. A new and official investigation is beginning as this book is being prepared.)

To conclude this segment of the book, Conchita recounts the final apparition of November 13, 1965:

When I reached the pines, I began to take out the religious objects that I had brought. As I was doing this, I heard a very sweet voice, clearly that of the Blessed Virgin, calling me by name. I answered, "What do you want?" Then I saw her with the Infant Jesus in her arms. She was dressed as usual and smiling.

I said that I had brought the rosaries [an enormous number] to be kissed and the Blessed Mother replied, "So I see."

I had a piece of chewing gum in my mouth, but when the Blessed Mother appeared I stopped chewing it and stuck it on a tooth. But the Blessed Mother obviously knew that I had it and said, "Why don't you get rid of your chewing gum and offer it up as a sacrifice for the glory of my Son?" Ashamed, I took it out and threw it on the ground.

Then the Blessed Mother said, "You will recall what I told you on your patronal feast day [the Immaculate Conception, December 8], that you would suffer much on earth? Well, have confidence in us and offer your suffering generously to our Hearts for the welfare of your brethren. In this way, you will feel how close we are to you." I said, "How unworthy I am, dear Mother, of the numerous graces I have received through you. And yet you come to me today to lighten the little cross that I now carry." Then the Virgin said, "Conchita, I have not come for your sake alone. I have come for all my children, so that I may draw them

closer to our Hearts."

Then she said, "Give me everything you have brought so that I may kiss it." I gave her everything. I had a crucifix with me. She kissed that also and said: "Place it in the hands of the Infant Jesus." This I did. The Infant did not say anything. I asked the Virgin, "This cross, will I take it to the convent with me?" She did not answer.

After having kissed everything, she said to me: "Through the kiss I have bestowed on these objects, my son will perform prodigies. Distribute them to others." "I will be glad to do this," I replied.

I asked the Lady to tell me about the petitions that people had requested I transmit to her. She told me about them. Then she said: "Talk to me, Conchita, talk to me about my children. I hold them all beneath my mantle." She smiled. "Do you know, Conchita, why I did not come myself on June 18, to deliver the message for the world? Because it hurt me to give it to you myself. But I must give it to you for your own good, and you should heed it for the glory of God. I love you very much and I desire your salvation and your reunion here in heaven with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. We can count on you, Conchita, can we not?" I replied, "If I were to see you continually, I would say yes. But if not I don't know, because I am so bad." "You do everything that you can, and we will help you. This will be the last time you see me here. But I shall always be with you and with all my children.

"Conchita, why do you not go more often to visit my Son in the tabernacle? He waits for you there day and night." It was raining heavily but the Blessed Virgin and the Infant Jesus didn't get wet at all. While I was looking at them, I did not realize that it was raining. However, afterwards I saw I was drenched.

I told the Virgin, "I am so happy when I see both of you. Why don't you take me now to heaven with you?" "Remember what I told you on your patronal feast day. When you present yourself before God, your hands must be filled with good works done for your brothers and for His glory. But at the present time your hands are empty."

Chapter 6

TRIP TO FÁTIMA

[Back to Top](#)

The trip to Fátima,* *(The Blessed Mother appeared in Fátima, Portugal, in 1917, to three children, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco. Seventy thousand people witnessed the miracle of the sun, which seemed to dance in the sky. Thirteen years later, in October of 1930, after a seven-year canonical investigation the apparitions were declared worthy of belief.) although a long drive, was quite pleasant. I found myself measuring the distance of this and other such trips with Conchita not in miles but in Rosaries. When first starting out, it is a few prayers for a safe trip. Then for any intention that one can think of a Rosary is said. I was no more accustomed to this than any other average practicing Christian. To my

surprise, it made miles of the trip go by smoothly. I could not help but think how different this trip would have been if I were traveling with a group of stunt people. We would have been stopping for any excuse imaginable to have a drink.

There were moments of quiet along the way and my mind would drift. Why were there ecstasies, miracles and levitation? Could it be to prove to the world how little we understand the laws of nature? Was it to prove the supernaturalism of these events? Or was it perhaps to invite people of science to join with people of religion to investigate? I know one thing for sure. If the angel and Our Blessed Mother appeared at Garabandal, then the events happened. But the big question was, could it have been the Devil interfering to make it all seem impossible?

When we stopped at one of the many unattended roadside water fountain spots, I asked Conchita if it could have been the Devil causing any of these things. She answered spontaneously:

People with experience in these matters investigated and are still investigating. However, for myself, when I thought that it could have been the Devil, causing not only some of these things, but all of them, I came to the conclusion that God would not permit him to do such things to children. I also thought that it would be impossible for the Devil to cause such feelings of inner joy. The only time that I can remember anything odd, when it could have been an evil presence, was during one of the apparitions. I saw a great darkness coming toward one side. This darkness was a kind of darkness that is difficult to explain in human terms. Then an ugly voice, very strange, came from the darkness calling my name.

I asked Conchita if it was of the same intensity as the light she saw in the ecstasies, when she and the other girls were once surrounded by light and no one appeared.

No, I couldn't compare the two. One is so white and so brilliant and peaceful. You could not imagine how beautiful, or explain it in human terms. I don't recall any other time this [darkness] happened — maybe it did, but I can't recall anything of that now.

We were back in the car now and it was one of those quiet moments. I thought that Conchita was wrong when she said that I couldn't imagine the brightness or the darkness. Because I could remember dreams that I had that included some of this very coloring that cannot be described. I recalled them quite frequently through the years, but for different reasons. They meant nothing to me, though I wondered how close a special effects crew on a film could come to creating them.

We finally arrived at Fátima, which is also located on a very high mountain. The apparitions there occurred in 1917. The surrounding area is very much like that of Garabandal; there was also a strong feeling of peace here. I wondered if the future would find Garabandal so well developed.

There is a large church called the Basilica located at one end of a large square that spans one quarter mile on each side. The entire center ground of the square is covered with an asphalt-like base. In the center of the square (maybe slightly left of center) is a small wooden outdoor chapel. This outdoor chapel is built on the actual site of Our Lady's visit.

We lodged at a small hotel directly behind the Basilica. But Conchita spent most of her time at the little outdoor chapel. A small bus takes the tourists down to the base of the mountain where the village is. We toured through the homes where the three visionaries lived. I doubt that the village, except for the

tourists, has changed much since 1917. The villagers were sitting in front of their homes, passing time, watching us as we looked at their town.

I don't know if there has ever been a time when the villagers resented the tourists invading their privacy, but I knew that there was no feeling of it this particular day. From the moment I arrived at Fátima, I experienced a great feeling of harmony and peace. This, as evidence shows, was a very common feeling. Many people from different parts of the world and of different faiths have come to visit Fátima, only to build homes and remain there. I was surprised at the different denominations that co-existed here. The greatest part of my visit to Fátima was spent in speaking to the many people of different faiths who had such great faith in the apparitions and devotion to Our Lady of Fátima.

Very early one morning I was speaking with a priest, Father Gabriel, who was assigned here at Fátima. He said to me with great sincerity that he was one of the most fortunate men alive because God saw fit to allow "a kid from the streets of Chicago" not only to become a priest but to be sent to Fátima, where Our Blessed Mother had come.

At the very beginning of the square a woman knelt on the rough asphalt, holding a small infant. She "walked" on her knees, making the long journey to the outdoor chapel. I don't recall whether she wore knee pads but the sight of her doing this disturbed me. I thought it cruel. I asked Father Gabriel, "Why don't you go over and tell that lady that she doesn't have to do that?" Remembering that I had expressed earlier in our conversation my feeling that people should be allowed to worship the way they wished, Father said, "Aren't you the same guy who said that people should worship in their own way?" He explained that perhaps this lady had prayed for Our Lady of Fátima to intercede for her to have a child and that she was now giving thanks. He told me that many people walked on their knees this way to the chapel as a way of doing penance. Some, by the time they reached it, would have raw and bleeding knees. Though I had said that people should worship the way they felt, I just couldn't understand *this* way. He knew well my feelings and in a matter-of-fact way said, "While they are called to this, you may not be."

It wasn't long before word got around that Conchita was in Fátima. Then her moments of prayer in front of the chapel were no longer private. I watched as person after person walked up to say hello and perhaps ask her a question, in most cases regarding things that had happened in Garabandal. I guess the most popular question was: "When will the Miracle take place?" Questions like this never seemed to bother her; but questions that made her out to be some type of guru or sorcerer, however, did have a way of irking her. In fact, on at least once such occasion she was visibly upset. A young man had said that he was told during a vision of Our Blessed Mother that she was to marry him. Although she mentioned no more to me, I sensed that he might have said other things. Apparently Fátima, too, attracts some strange people.

Still, Conchita treated everyone courteously. To her offensive questioners, she would often remark that she or the other visionaries knew no more than anyone else, and quite often a lot less.

One of the three visionaries of Fátima, Sister Lucy, was still alive (and is at this writing) during our visit. Conchita told me that once when Sister Lucy was receiving visitors that she was one of those lined up to say hello to her. When Conchita met her, the nun looked up and said, "Don't I know you?" Conchita made light of this as she told me the story, but I couldn't help marveling at such familiarity in this first encounter.

It is worth mentioning something else that happened on this trip to Fátima. We were very close to a location where a woman was reported to have a bleeding crucifix. This was the place where Hosts were said to "rain from the sky." Conchita's lady friend agreed that she would have the driver take us there. Conchita would not go. She stayed at Fátima and suggested that we should not waste our time either. However, we chose to take the ride.

We were warmly received, after an initial hesitancy, however. I explained that I was in films and had heard of these happenings. I guess this was the right approach, for we were then allowed in to see the crucifix.

What we saw looked more like nail polish than blood. When we came out one of the women involved with this "cult" (for lack of a better word) ran up to me excitedly, saying, "Come quickly, one of the men has just gone into ecstasy." I had a little eight-millimeter camera with me, but no film. Now, this lady who came after us was enormous in size and rough-looking. By the time we reached the man, who was kneeling and looking up, a group of twenty or so of these followers had gathered around him. As we approached, we were given the once-over. It took no special insight to realize that a show was being arranged for us. The big woman started shouting to me, "Shoot, shoot your camera!"

I can remember going through the motions of filming with the empty camera, working our way back to the car. The big woman followed us. She wore a large gold or brass locket around her neck, hanging from a large chain. She came up to me and asked me to put my ear near it and listen. I was too afraid not to, so of course I did.

Then she asked me if I heard the pulsation, because inside was one of the Hosts that fell from the sky one day. She also stated that the reason why we were allowed to come into the compound was because the owner of the cross had a premonition that I was the one who was sent to do the movie. I didn't answer her as I quickly entered the car. I was glad to be there. I mused over the great "premonition" that this woman had about my doing the film and I wondered how she would explain it to her followers later on.

That visit was not my only mistake. The next mistake was telling Conchita about it. She roared with laughter at me for not listening to her. In fact, during the entire trip back to Madrid that's all she did in between Rosaries.

When we arrived back in Madrid, Conchita made an appointment with NO.DO., the Spanish news agency that had covered many of the Garabandal events. The footage that I had seen earlier was a home-movie type enlarged to sixteen millimeter, making the film very grainy. The footage from the archives of NO.DO. was crystal-clear and very impressive.

I bade farewell to Conchita and Madrid and headed back to what would become some of the most difficult months in my life: editing and translating the sound track. It was extremely difficult because of the subject matter. I had necessarily to be as accurate as possible and the task was made more difficult because many words simply do not translate literally from Spanish to English.

Conchita would be coming shortly to start her new life in America, living and working in New York.

Chapter 7

KEEPING PROMISE /
CONCHITA'S MARRIAGE[Back to Top](#)

Months had passed and, with the film completed, it was time to keep my promise, the one I had made alone in my room at Garabandal. I would show the completed work to Church authorities. The appointment was made for me to screen the film at the New York City Archdiocese.

Although I can't recall the weather that day as I walked along Madison Avenue, my thoughts are still very fresh in my mind. I was in a state of absolute panic. I wondered to whom I had promised that I would show the completed work to Church authorities. I knew that it had been done in my room, alone, while still in Garabandal. But was it in prayer to God or the Blessed Mother or simply to myself? If I had been sure it was just a promise to myself I would have now reneged on the spot. But, lacking certainty, I felt compelled to follow through. So I proceeded to the door.

The doorbell even looked threatening, for it was larger than most buttons, in a large brass plate. Some of my last thoughts were: when I made the promise I wasn't aware of how firm the words of the second message would sound on film. "Many cardinals, bishops and priests are on the road to perdition." Why couldn't Our Blessed Mother have at least added rabbis and ministers? I worried.

Before I could think any more, and before ringing, a woman came and opened the door. She noticed me watching the bell, somewhat confused, and she said, smiling, "I saw you standing there."

My words tripped off my tongue. "I have an appointment to screen a film today." She invited me into the waiting room. Within seconds a priest entered. He was young and in fine physical shape, in fact very muscular. My first reaction was to picture him picking me up bodily, projector and all, and throwing me out onto Madison Avenue.

Instead, he was very polite and efficient. He had been through many similar situations before. He sat very calmly while viewing the film. But I was nervous. I fumbled while threading the projector and looking for the plug. As the minutes passed, he looked all the stronger. I was tempted to kick the plug out "accidentally" when the film came near the second message. But I sat it out.

When the film finished, once again in a very efficient, noncommittal way he gave me his conclusion.* *(Later I produced a second documentary on the apparitions. This was produced at Bishop Ford High School in Brooklyn. The entire translated interview is in the Appendix.) The film contained nothing in conflict with Church dogma or doctrine. So there was no objection to it being shown. I asked him what he thought of the film. He said, "I never bother with any private revelations. Revelation to me ends with the Bible." His faith required nothing else. There was no doubt in my mind that he meant exactly that.

In no way did I or should anyone else take the priest's words to mean that this documentary film was sanctioned as to the authenticity of the events. What the priest said simply was that nothing in the film contradicted doctrine or dogma. I was to think of his words ten years later.

At the close of 1982, through Conchita, I was introduced to Father Walter Ciszek, S.J., a priest who had spent twenty-three years behind the Iron Curtain, fifteen of them in Russian prisons and Siberian labor camps. I enjoyed many long talks with Father Ciszek. In one of them he mentioned that, when a force of any source is trying to take over man, religion, or even a country, the first area of attack is the basic beliefs of the target. It was then that I recalled the words of the priest at the New York Archdiocese: that the film contained nothing contrary to dogma or doctrine and thus it did not attack any basic beliefs. Father Ciszek, too, was very cautious where private revelations were concerned. He told me stories of the subhuman conditions the prisoners in Siberia were forced to endure. They are as unbelievable as, sometimes more so than, supernatural phenomena — such as days spent working in weather as cold as sixty degrees below zero without eating and with very little clothing. When these prisoners were given food as a reward for fulfilling their day's quota of work, it was a simple cup of watery soup and bread. Yet, in many cases, their only crime was trying to spread the word of God.

Father Ciszek said that among the religious political prisoners were men of many faiths. He also said that very often the Protestant preachers, such as the Baptists and Seventh-Day Adventists, were treated more harshly than the Catholic priests. Yet, many times the common bond of their mutual love for God saw these men protecting one another, as they held their services in secret for fear of death. These services also demonstrated the devotion of the faithful lay person. Any inmate discovered attending services was subject to the same disciplinary action as that taken against the preachers themselves. It was the very faith of these lay people that would strengthen the faith of the preacher. The words of Our Lady to Conchita apply very clearly here: *"They are all my children."*

Back to the film. Since it was not a commercial film, there is no way to measure how effective it was. I do know that it was translated into many languages. Through the years, I've heard that it has been shown on many television stations and in theaters around the world. The message was simple: God loves us all equally and above all things.

The coming and going of the next year became quite hectic in Conchita's life. She was now working as a nurse practitioner in a doctor's office (Dr. Jeronimo Dominguez) in upper New York City. I saw her quite often and her answer to the question I asked at each meeting was always the same. I would ask, "When will the Miracle happen?" And she would reply, "There is less time to wait than the last time you asked."

Her friends, of course, for the most part consisted of people who were followers of the Garabandal events. Although she would visit some of their houses when requested, she would never speak or appear at any of the meetings in an announced fashion. One person would tell another that Conchita was going to attend a Rosary rally or other event, but this was the extent of her involvement. She did not like or allow, with her knowledge, any public notice that she would be at a particular place. She was more likely to agree, after receiving permission, to talk with media people. The reason for this was the position the Church had then taken, as explained in the following (a copy of which was sent to me in June, 1982 by the Vatican Secretary of State, Monsignor A. Lanzoni, in response to a letter I had written the Holy See on April 18):

LETTER OF THE SACRED CONGREGATION
FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH TO THE
ARCHBISHOP OF NEW ORLEANS — APRIL 21, 1970

This office has received your letter of April 8, 1970, in which you expressed justifiable apprehension about the diffusion of the Garabandal movement in your archdiocese and in which you asked for clear and reliable guidelines from the Holy See for dealing with this phenomenon.

The Holy See shares your preoccupation about the manifest and increasing confusion due to the diffusion of this movement among the faithful and desires with this letter to clarify its position on the matter.

This Sacred Congregation, despite requests from various bishops and faithful, has always refused to define the supernatural character of the events of Garabandal. After the definitive negative judgment issued by the Curia of Santander, this Sacred Congregation, after attentive examination of the proceedings forwarded to this office, has often praised the prudence that characterized the method followed in the examination, but has still decided to leave the direct responsibility for the matter to the local Ordinary.

The Holy See has always held that the conclusions and dispositions of the Bishop of Santander were sufficiently secure guidelines for the bishops, in order to dissuade people from participating in pilgrimages and other acts of devotion that are based on claims connected with, or founded on the presumed apparitions and messages of Garabandal. On March 10, 1969, this Sacred Congregation wrote a letter to this effect to the Bishop of Santander who has also asked for a more explicit declaration of the Holy See in the matter.

However, promoters of the Garabandal movement have tried to minimize the decisions and the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Santander. This Sacred Congregation wants it to be clearly understood that the Bishop of Santander has been and continues to be the only one with complete jurisdiction in this matter and the Holy See has no intention of examining this question any further since it holds that the examinations already carried out are sufficient as well as are the official declarations of the Bishop of Santander. There is no truth to the statement that the Holy See has named an "Official Papal Private Investigator of Garabandal" and affirmations attributed to this anonymous personage to the extent that "the verification of the Garabandal apparitions lies completely in the hands of the Holy Father Pope Paul VI" and other such expressions that aim at undermining the authority of the decisions of the Bishop of Santander are completely unfounded.

In order to reply to certain doubts that you expressed in your letter, this Sacred Congregation wishes to assert that the Holy See has never approved, even indirectly, the Garabandal movement, that it has never encouraged or blessed Garabandal promoters or centres. Rather, the Holy See deplors the fact that certain persons and institutions persist in fomenting the movement in obvious contradiction with the dispositions of ecclesiastical authority, and thus disseminate confusion among the peoples, especially among the simple and defenseless.

From what has been said so far, you will easily realize that, though this Sacred Congregation certainly agrees with the contents of the note of May 10, 1969 (as published in various countries and especially in the French magazine, *La Documentation Catholique*, September 21, 1969, n.1.547,p. 821), it must say that it is inexact to attribute the part of the

text that deals with the lack of supernatural character of the events of Garabandal to the Sacred Congress, which has always striven to abstain from any direct declaration on the question, precisely because it did not consider it necessary to do so after the clear and express decisions of the Bishop of Santander. This is the genuine meaning of the letter written on January 21, 1970, by the Most Reverent Paul Philippe, Secretary of the sacred Congregation, to the editor in chief of *La Documentation Catholique*.

In order to contribute further to your pastoral action in this matter, this office is enclosing other essential documents already published in other countries, such as Spain, i.e., the two official notices of the Bishop of Santander, two letters of the Sacred Congregation to the same bishop, and a letter to the Apostolic Delegate to Mexico.

This office hopes in this letter to have clarified a question that concerns not just your archdiocese but also other dioceses.

With sentiments of deepest esteem and cordial respect, I am

Devotedly yours,

Franc., Card., Seper, Praef.

(Special Symbol) Paul Philippe,

Secretary

The building where Conchita worked as a nurse was an old apartment house. The hallway was rather dark. One day when she stepped off the elevator a man with a knife approached her and demanded her money. She recalls: "He spoke fast. I really didn't know what he said, but felt sorry that he had to steal. I gave him my money, and a brown scapular I spotted when I opened my pocketbook. When he stepped back from me, he looked confused. I was not the least bit afraid then, but I am now as I look back at it."

Conchita was in the habit of giving brown scapulars then to everyone she met, including all the patients. The doctor for whom she worked was a very religious man and a firm believer in Garabandal, so he found no objection to this.

Now, besides settling in this new country and everything else, Conchita had wedding bells on her mind. But there were certain matters to be resolved before she and Patrick Keena could marry. They had first met when he visited Garabandal on a pilgrimage. Many of their meetings lasted but a few minutes. He always seemed to be on the run. Once you meet him, however briefly, you will not easily forget him. His blue eyes seem to give off a signal that he, too, listens with great intensity. He is mild-mannered, humble, and very enjoyable company. Whatever the difficulties, they were resolved and a date was set for the wedding.

The day began with the normal confusion on the morning of a wedding in the bride's home. Conchita's friend Mary Loli was there. As the girls were shuffling to get ready, some people were trying to get Mary Loli to answer questions regarding the events of Garabandal. But the girls were too busy with final preparations and last-minute worries about dresses, et cetera. And, like every bride, Conchita was nervous. The girls turned their full attention to her and tried to calm her down in a motherly fashion.

The limousine that Patrick had arranged was overdue. I was quickly cast in the role of chauffeur. Conchita was so nervous that it never dawned on her that something was wrong until the limousine spotted us on the road and we stopped.

The driver explained to Conchita that he had gotten lost. Conchita didn't want to change cars, whispering jestingly, "He may get lost again." This arrangement really worked out for the best. When we arrived at the church the street was crowded with people. They spotted the limousine behind us and rushed over for a look at the bride. In the meantime, we were able to pull right up in front of the church. Conchita was safely inside before she was really noticed.

The wedding mass was reverent and beautiful. The reception was a gala event. Conchita González became Mrs. Patrick Keena.

Chapter 8

THE INTERVAL BETWEEN MEETINGS

[Back to Top](#)

Things had moved along rapidly in the Church in the seventies. Pope John XXIII's call for ecumenism was being answered. Changes from Vatican II were being put into practice. The Charismatic Renewal Movement was growing. It was far from a smooth transition. Yet problems were no strangers to the Church.

Many of the questions that would arise during these years might well have been answered at Garabandal. Such as, "Does God want ecumenism?" During an apparition in 1961, Conchita's inquiry to the heavenly visitor was responded to with the words, "They are all my children" (see Chapter 3).

Much of the news recorded, both in the Church and through the news media, seemed to have had a preview in Garabandal. Three subjects in particular attracted much attention: angels, life after death, the Charismatic Renewal.

Concerning "heavenly visitors," the news media carried many stories from different parts of the world which were reported by reliable witnesses. These witnesses told of meeting with a person who would give them a message, then disappear right before their eyes. These visitors were often referred to as angels.

The question, "Are there angels?" was answered in Garabandal on June 18, 1961 (see Chapter 2).

Many people of science were now doing intensive research in the area of life after death. The news media, movies and books addressed the subject. People who somehow were revived after being pronounced clinically dead told of their experiences. They seemed to float out of their bodies, they said, and watch everything that was going on below where they lay. They reported "floating" in a dark tunnel and seeing a brilliant light ahead. They experienced a wonderful feeling of peace and joy. After being

greeted by deceased loved ones, they would hear a voice telling them that they must return to their bodies, as "it was not time." These people have a common feeling now that they no longer fear death and they want to lead better lives. The question, "Is there life after death?" was answered in Garabandal on August 9, 1961 (see Chapter 12).

Continued fascination with this phenomenon prompted me to write Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (a well-known author and researcher on this subject). I received a written response that read, in part: "Thank you for your interest in my work (with dying patients). Yes, I do believe that the feeling of floating out of the body is the soul or spirit."

The Charismatic Renewal had its beginnings in 1966 with the formation of small prayer groups at Duquesne University, Notre Dame and the University of Michigan, as well as other campuses. The movement received much publicity during the 1960's. With firm beliefs in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, it differed from other Pentecostal movements mainly for its belief that speaking in tongues was not essential.

These spiritual gifts are openly shared with the community. Among the gifts or favors as they are sometimes referred to, is the gift of prophecy. Certainly a connection can be drawn here with the events of Garabandal. When Conchita was informed of Pope John XXIII's death she relayed the words of the heavenly visitor: "There now remain three Popes."

St. Thomas Aquinas referred to the gifts of the Holy Spirit: "They are ordained for the manifestation of faith and spiritual doctrine." It is understood that the Holy Spirit dwells actively in the Church. This makes the Church essentially charismatic.

Here are some of the charismatic phenomena connected with Garabandal in some way:

Visions — the perception of objects that are naturally invisible to man.

Locutions — interior illuminations by means of words or statements.

Revelations — manifestations of hidden truths that are not normally accessible to man.

Hierognosis — the ability to recognize a person or object as holy or blessed.

Flames of Love — burning sensations in the body without apparent cause.

Stigmata — the spontaneous appearance of wounds, with bleeding, that resemble the wounds of the crucified Christ.

Bilocation — the simultaneous presence of the material body in two places at the same time.

Sweet Odors — emanating from a living or dead body of a person.

Levitation — the elevation of the human body above the ground and suspension in air, without visible cause.

One thing that is necessary to understand about such phenomena is that their origin should not be attributed to a divine power unless all possible natural or diabolical explanations have been excluded. You or I cannot determine this; so, here, we can understand Conchita's philosophy. She will, even after

the great Miracle occurs, wait for the approval of the Church. Whatever source one uses to study charismatic gifts, he or she is constantly reminded that, because some people have received gifts, this does not necessarily mean that they are holy people.

I have sought the opinions of various priests concerning the state of purgatory, since it is mentioned in the Garabandal message. Though I received differing views the only basis for argument is one of semantics. For the believer, the goal is salvation; and I found that purgatory was described as a place in the next world where souls are confirmed in grace and are certain of salvation.

Of all the Garabandal events, I must admit that levitation holds a special attraction for me. History contains many stories on the subject — both religious and nonreligious in approach.

One of the best, in my opinion, is that of the Franciscan friar, St. Joseph of Cupertino. (Born June 17, 1603, and died September 18, 1663.) Because of his numerous levitations, he became known as the "flying friar." He had a very difficult time becoming a priest. He was dismissed as a lay brother in the Capuchin Order. He was often referred to as being clumsy. He was finally accepted in the Conventuals. His obedience and simplicity were admired, but his progress in theological studies was quite poor. He was finally ordained in 1628. He was sent to a town where, for a decade, the people witnessed the ecstasies of this "flying friar." The Church authorities tried to hide him, but people would always find him. He was given an audience with the Holy Father, Pope Urban VIII. When he saw the Holy Father he went into ecstasy and began rising from the ground. Once he ascended to a high branch of a tree. While there, he came out of the ecstasy and had to call for help. The story goes that he was afraid of height. He was declared a saint on July 16, 1767.

Chapter 9

TEN YEARS LATER: CONCHITA REVISITED

(She Talks About the Last Pope and No World War III)

[Back to Top](#)

Conchita's house is on a pleasant, tree-lined street in Queens, a residential borough of New York. It is a nice home — small yet quite comfortable. The homes in her area are modest row houses, all of the same design.

She and Patrick are the parents of four children, three girls of school age and a son, age four. Her oldest child, named after herself, is affectionately called Conchi. Then there are Miriam, Anna María and the youngest, Patrick, Jr. Though many things have happened in Conchita's life over the years, there is no apparent sign of suffering. Her husband Patrick bought and later sold a small restaurant. He is now working as a paperhanger on roadside billboards. Conchita told me during a recent visit that he works from morning until night, but that they are able to make ends meet.

Our recent conversations have taken place during school hours when Conchita's time is more her own. Young Patrick is usually playing with his toy soldiers or cars. A well-behaved youngster, he

demonstrates an uncanny protectiveness toward his mother. The girls, too, are polite and well behaved. When they return from school, very seldom does Conchita have to remind them not to stop at the television. Except on a few occasions, they go immediately to change their clothes and begin their school homework. Conchita says that, because of her limited knowledge of English, helping them most times is a difficult task. During this period of time she was preparing for her daughter Conchita's first Holy Communion. She asked me to join them for the occasion.

Initially, I found the routine somewhat difficult, particularly the number of phone calls to her home. Conchita's patience has not changed over the years. She can speak to people while simultaneously doing some household chores.

Although she was pleased about cooperating on this book, she declined to accept any monetary consideration. Her concern is for the truth in reporting the Garabandal events:

I enjoy company and love conversation regarding God, but I do not like to discuss the events of Garabandal and very seldom do. I realize that you are doing a job and I will be happy to help. I don't feel any obligation to talk about the events. Many times since I did the BBC documentary the local television people have requested to show it. I have declined to agree to let them. None of my neighbors know that I am Conchita of Garabandal. They know me as María Concepción Keena. A girlfriend of mine, for several years, was recently invited to see one of the documentaries about Garabandal. She told me that she almost went into shock when she realized that it was me. I really don't know what my neighbors think about the constant coming and going of visitors. But I don't see how I could have found better neighbors. Every one of them is very nice. Many times my husband helps them and they in turn help him. Because so many of the visitors are priests and nuns, I suppose they feel that we are very active with some sort of a religious foundation. Some of the neighbors come on Friday nights to the holy hour.

On one visit I asked her a couple of things about the Miracle. My most frequent question, of course, is "When will it be?" With a smile comes her usual reply:

Ten years less than ten years ago. There are many more people asking me that today. Mainly through the efforts of Joe Lomangino, the Garabandal message has been spread around the world. He just came back from New Zealand. I do very little in regard to spreading the message.

Many of the questions I am asked are in regard to the end of the world. I explain, to the best of my ability, that I have no knowledge in this area. The other day some woman asked me this question. I told her that I didn't know any such thing, but since any one of us could die this very day, she would be better off praying and concentrating on her own salvation. This is one of the very often misunderstood areas of what has been reported on the Virgin's visits. I realize that some of this reporting has been my fault. Sometimes, like everyone else, I would venture to state my opinion of what a certain thing meant, not realizing how many people would put more credence in what I said than anyone else's interpretation of the Virgin's words.. They shouldn't, but they do, so now I never say what I may think of something in regard to the Virgin's words.

What had happened with regard to people thinking of the prediction of the end of the

world is this: on June 3, 1963, I was standing in my kitchen with my mother and, I think, my aunt Maximina, and maybe some others. When I learned that Pope John XXIII had died, I said, "Well, then there remain only three Popes." This is what the Virgin had told me. Someone asked if that meant three Popes until the end of the world. I replied that the Virgin said no such thing. The Virgin told me simply that after Pope John XXIII only three Popes remained, before the end of time. Then I was asked, "Isn't that the same thing, the end of time and the end of the world?" I said that I didn't know. I've since been asked if that meant until the day of the great Miracle. As a matter of fact, you asked me that. I only know that the Virgin said three Popes remain. Our present Pope is the third Pope.

The day I learned that he had been shot and wounded badly, I felt sad, of course, but I never even said one Hail Mary for him. I knew what had to happen, if the events of Garabandal are true. This has always been one of the signs I've watched for myself. There were many people who felt that the new Pope, when elected after the death of Pope John XXIII, would not agree with Pope John's Council of Vatican II and stop it. This, too, they asked me that day. I told them that the new Pope would continue the Council and that three Popes remained. Now these are taken as predictions of mine. They are not. They are things the Virgin told me. Someone has told me of the predictions of St. Malachi. I know of him now, but knew nothing of him then. He was a Benedictine monk and, according to his predictions, made in the fifteen hundreds, five more Popes remain. Maybe he is right. I cannot say. But I am sure of what the Virgin told me.

The other sign I look for is World War III. I cannot recall when, but I am sure the Virgin told me there would be no World War III. I can find this in my diary. Some people who are very familiar with the events of Garabandal inform me that it was not World War III the Virgin referred to. But, at the request of people who were concerned about a possible outbreak of war due to trouble in Paris or somewhere else, I asked a question of the Virgin regarding this. She told me that the difficulty would not result in war. Now, I don't recall whether this happened or not. I'm sure it did or these people would not have told me so. But along with the election of a new Pope, this was the other sign I looked for to authenticate for myself that the apparitions occurred. Now, I only mean to end my doubts. I don't mean to authenticate them, for only Our Holy Father can do that. Even after the Miracle, I will wait for the approval of the Church.

While we are talking about the Miracle, you mentioned that Garabandal is no mystery to you. It is simple: either it happened or it didn't, and the Miracle will prove that. But a mystery was made when I gave some of the events that would correspond with the great Miracle; I suppose I did this myself. What I was trying to do was not to have people coming to Garabandal long before it was going to happen. There is just no need for it. There wouldn't even be a place for them or enough food. I'd like to give the date and get it over with, but I am not allowed and I am sure the Virgin knows best. I will also tell you that it is going to happen either in April or May. So, if the Warning came in June, people would never expect the great Miracle in July. I cannot tell you how far apart the Warning and the Miracle will be, since I do not know when the Warning will occur.* *(A conclusion can safely be drawn here that Conchita certainly would not have the people come if the Warning happened more than a calendar year before.)

On one particular visit to her home, she mentioned to me that the BBC had just completed a new documentary about the events at Garabandal; in fact, they had recently come to her home to interview her. She added that they were all nice people, whether of the Catholic faith or not. I was gratified to learn that it was our documentary which introduced them to the subject in the first place and prompted their own "investigation."

After they completed their film, she told me, she asked the producer if they now believed. He replied, "I don't know about the events, but I believe that you believe them."

I have always had a feeling that Conchita, somehow, was informed in the course of the apparitions that she would marry. During this particular visit I turned my questioning to the Virgin's kissing of wedding bands and the possibility that Conchita had been informed during the apparitions about her own marriage. That she has maintained her sense of humor all these years is evident by her answer:

Obviously, I would say that the Virgin recognized that marriage was a blessed state. Once, wedding bands had been returned to a couple who requested that the bands be kissed, but the Virgin would not kiss them. The Virgin said that, since the couple was not married but living together, they were not wedding bands. But, as for the reason I got married, no, I was not told that I would be married. I got married because I was in love. Jacinta is married now and living in California, and Mary Loli is also married and living in Massachusetts. Mari Cruz has been married the longest and is still living in Spain. (She lifts her eyebrows and makes a comical face.) Strange, isn't it, that four single girls are now married?

Once, years ago, after the apparitions, I was alone in the chapel of a convent school which I was attending. I was very sad, almost crying. I was thinking of how I missed everyone and how I really did not want to be there. This was a moment which I will never forget. All of a sudden, I felt the most wonderful embrace, as if God was holding and comforting me. But one thing was for sure: the convent was not for me. Little did I realize how much sacrifice and penance was involved in married life. It is not always easy.

When asked if there is anything new with regard to the Virgin's message, Conchita enters into deep thought before answering:

No, but that is not the nature of the permission I received.

I have permission from the Bishop of Santander to answer questions. If I went any further than that, I would not be obedient. In order to assist the British Broadcasting Company with their documentary, it was necessary for me to obtain permission from the bishop. He approved it in a way that he hadn't before. He said, "I bless it for the glory of Jesus and Mary." but he never extended any other freedoms.

A brother who attends to the needs of the bishop called me from Spain just this week. This brother asked me about a personal message I had given him at the time of the apparitions. I could in no way remember it. Then he told me that what I had told him did, indeed, come about. As he spoke of it, I was then able to recall it, but I cannot tell you, since it was a personal message for this brother. So maybe I answered no too quickly to your question, but I really do not recall anything; and even if I did, I do not have the permission to tell you.

Chapter 10

DOUBTS AND DENIALS

[Back to Top](#)

A couple of years ago, when I was over in Ireland on a film project, I discovered how well Garabandal was known there. Padre Pio was also often discussed. Several cabs in which I rode had pictures of Padre Pio. I cannot recall speaking to anyone, when the conversation involved religion, who was not aware of Garabandal.

There was a man I spoke with while at a hotel in Dublin. He had just completed a documentary on the life of Padre Pio and was also well versed on the Garabandal events. He told me that, on many occasions in Garabandal, there were spectacular phenomena, when many people witnessed the sun spinning. These occurrences were often reported in the months of October and May. Later on, I was to read many signed affidavits of such reports. I made a point to check all of this with Conchita.

There are many people in the world who have spent years of their lives keeping records of the events. Many people have compiled clues by which to come up with the date of the Miracle. I have met many of them. It is clearly no more than speculation; some will be right and some will be wrong. For myself, I choose not to guess here. While many books by scholars and theologians tell the story and interpret it in a very accurate manner, there are also some very inaccurate accounts and inaccurate reporting.

That is why the present book has been prepared. In relying on Conchita's own words, it is hoped that any confusion will be erased.

When asked if she ever had any doubts, since the Virgin had informed the girls that they would experience doubts themselves, Conchita told me during a documentary interview:

Yes, in 1967, some time after the apparitions had taken place, I did have doubts. It happened suddenly on August 15. I will never forget it. There were many people around me and I was overwhelmed with the feeling that I was not honest. I felt I was deceiving all those people and that I ought to confess it. So I went to a priest and told him that I hadn't seen the Virgin and that I wanted to tell the bishop that it was like an illusion or a dream, or living a lie. After confession to the priest, I left for the town of Pamplona because I was studying there. The bishop came and asked me to tell him everything. I told him I had never seen the Virgin and that I had been deceiving everybody all the time. And that I wanted to confess to him and tell him everything else. These doubts and denials of the Virgin's apparitions lasted five or six days. Since then, up to this time, I have a confusion and doubt within me. I am waiting for the Miracle to confirm whether this is true or not. To see if I saw the Virgin or not. But I am sure that she told me the date of the Miracle, as well as what the Miracle would be.

Conchita had told me that even the words of the message, few as they were, would mean different things to different people. For instance, many "followers" have concluded that penance was the main part of the message (in particular, physical mortification). But I am certain, having met and spoken at length with Conchita, that devotion to the Eucharist is paramount. Nonetheless, I — like many persons — am disturbed about others' emphasis on penance. Seeking some insight, I questioned Father Walter Ciszek. He said, "Now, I would certainly be a certifiable lunatic had I chosen to suffer the degrading punishment I was given in the Russian prison camps. However, as it came, I could offer it up to God. St. Francis was inflicted with the wounds of Christ and shared these wounds as a penance for all mankind. I do not engage in any self-inflicted type of penance, but God may call some to this. It is practiced in some orders, but always under supervision and never to the extent of harming one's body. Whenever it is practiced without permission, no matter how slight, it is not of God."

I then called a nun who helps run a hospice in Manhattan. Her determined response was: "Who has time, with all the suffering around, to add any more to themselves? My penance is accepting every day's work." If nothing else, I learned that there are — and can be — differing views on physical "penance," depending on circumstance.

Conchita then explained to me what had happened in her case and I realized the validity of the action in her own mind.

Yes, that was the belt the Virgin instructed me to remove. However, later on, my spiritual adviser permitted me to wear it. Once I was under his care, I was totally obedient to him. To me, he now spoke as the Virgin herself. Later on, the mother superior, in the convent school I was attending, told me to remove it. So of course I did. I feel closer to God when I am doing penance. Then, I had no penance at all. Today I have all to do to keep up with my everyday duties. I know you don't agree with this type of penance, but you should realize that God gives different callings to each person. I certainly don't believe that everyone should harm himself, but a little discomfort keeps you closer to Jesus. When you are under careful supervision, I think it is all right.

It would also be important to speak with two other people who are strongly connected with the events at Garabandal; Joe Lomangino and Father Ramón Andreu. Joe Lomangino has been a diligent worker for the Garabandal movement and is mentioned in connection with the great promised Miracle. Father Ramón Andreu, the brother of Father Luis Andreu, has been involved since almost the very beginning of the events and witnessed many of the ecstasies.

Chapter 11

JOE LOMANGINO AND FATHER RAMÓN ANDREU SPEAK

[Back to Top](#)

Joe Lomangino, a close friend of Conchita and her family, has long been a leader in spreading the Garabandal message. Blinded many years ago in an accident, he has often been enmeshed in controversy

concerning the Garabandal movement in this country.

Yet he remains an important part of the whole story, since Conchita told him that the Virgin said he would be cured on the day of the great Miracle.

One question I had in mind concerned a letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith denouncing the Garabandal centers. As Joe had started the majority of these centers, it seemed obvious to me that the letter was directed to him.

Since "obedience" is considered the first priority in such matters, I surmised that Joe would be considered "disobedient" by continuing his efforts, even if he was motivated by love.

Joe was somewhat grayer, but for one reason or another he looked younger and healthier than when I had seen him last, about ten years earlier. He had married since then. He and his family own a large and successful carting business in Woodside, New York. It was there I went to see him and speak about Garabandal.

On the wall behind him hangs a picture of Joe with his wife and two children. It is so difficult to imagine that he has never seen them. They are really a beautiful family.

Joe, although well educated, has a somewhat rough way of speaking. Yet there were times during the following talk when he would have to stop because something he recalled would make him cry. He would shake his head slightly and his voice would crack. He was moved mostly when he recalled his meetings with Padre Pio and when he recalled old friends with whom he had had misunderstandings. It was an emotional experience to watch and listen to this man — so in love with life and so sincere of heart. I invited him to tell the story in his own way.

I had been to Garabandal before, but the day I would like to start with is June 18, 1965. This was a very important day in the events of Garabandal. It was the day of the second message. Upon receiving an invitation from Conchita to come to Garabandal, ten other Americans and I made the trip. She had informed me that on June 18, 1965 she was going to receive a message from St. Michael the archangel.

On my previous trips to Garabandal, I had become very friendly with Conchita and her family. My brother Anthony and I were guests at their home.

On June 18, the village was very crowded with people. As this is somewhat dangerous for me, I did not venture away from Conchita's home. We prayed the Rosary the entire day, either in the house or just in front of it.

When evening came, Conchita asked her two brothers to lead me to the *cuadro*, the spot where Conchita had first seen the angel. When the people saw me being led, they all followed us to the cuadro. We stood to the side in the cuadro. Suddenly someone nudged me and said that Conchita was coming. As soon as she got there, she went into ecstasy. I was so close that I could have touched her. The ecstasy lasted about fifteen minutes. My brother Anthony was sitting on a wall nearby, and until today, he has never forgotten the look on Conchita's face while she was listening to St. Michael the archangel delivering the second message.

After the ecstasy, Conchita went to her house, where there were many priests interviewing her. My brother and I retired to our room. Around eleven-thirty that night, Conchita knocked at our door and excitedly said in Spanish, "Didn't I tell you that St. Michael was coming?" She was very happy and so were we. I felt a great feeling of grace that night.

Here, let me recall for you the entire chain of events which led to my being there where I obtained many graces, which you will see I did not deserve. I was a hard-working boy, actually driving my father's ice truck, when I was ten years old. So, maybe, I did do something good to deserve all these graces, but I don't know.

It was that fatal day, June 27, 1947. I was sixteen years old and had just finished my third year of high school. I came up to the rear screen door of my house. I was very happy thinking about the fact that I would be a senior in September. I peered in through the screen door and saw my mother in the kitchen. She looked at me in a very strange way and said, "Joey, where did you get that grease on your face?" She pointed to her own face by her eyes to show me where she had seen the grease on my face. I rubbed my face and there was no grease. I looked behind me to see if the sun was casting a shadow on my face. She opened the door and saw that my face was clean. But her expression still showed concern and she said "Joey, don't go out today. You will break your mother's heart." Now, thirty-six years later, I can still hear her words. My mother was from Italy and my father was born here. We all felt that she had brought over some of the superstitions from the old country. But this day I should have listened.

I changed my clothes and went down to the cellar to get a box of wrenches to fix a flat on my father's truck. On the way out, my mother pleaded with me to stay home. I just said, "Mom, don't worry."

My father's truck was an old three-ton Ford. I jacked it up and removed the rear tire. I carried it over to the garage to put air in it. One must be very careful with this type of tire because they have a tendency to explode. I took the necessary precautions but it exploded anyway. My lights went out. I had a three-inch fracture across my eyes, right where my mother had seen the grease. I was in a coma, but on July 16 it became a crisis and a priest was called to the hospital. I remember hearing the Latin words of the priest. I asked him why it was so dark. He told me that I had had an accident and had bandages on my eyes. Then he heard my confession. After which, he went down the hall and told my family that I was awake.

As I see it, the next thing in the chain of events took place in 1948. I was at home recuperating, when I was awakened from a sleep and heard a beautiful voice: "Joey, do you want your eyesight back?" "Yes, I do." "Then pray seventeen Hail Marys, seven Acts of Contrition, and five Our Fathers, three times a day." Then I fell back to sleep. When I awoke I told my mother what had taken place. She said that maybe it was an angel or the Blessed Mother and she told me to say the prayers. I have said them from that day on.

Things were now getting very bad financially for the family. My father could not drive anymore and, since I was blind, hardships were coming rapidly.

The next year I entered a school for the blind, New York Institute for the Blind, 999 Pelham Parkway. I was bitter and unhappy and, since I was not a prayerful person, it took me five years to organize the prayers that the voice had asked me to say. I said them morning, noon and night. It was tough.

There were days when there was absolutely nothing to do. One day, in May or June, I was walking down the ward going further and further. I went too far. The nurse had left a door open and I fell down the stairs. I can still feel the tumbling and fright of not knowing what's happening and when and if one will stop falling. It was, I guess, ten or twelve steps. Somehow, after stumbling and falling again, I made my way up to the top. Then, searching for the door, I banged my head into it. I began crying and, feeling the walls, made my way back to my room. I closed the door so that no one could see me messed up and crying. In all my frustration and anger, I began to pray and fell asleep. I had a very real dream. I saw what seemed like a huge golf course with green, green grass. I was standing with my back against a group of trees. I was looking up to the heavens with my blue eyes as though the accident had never taken place. I felt very peaceful when I awoke and also felt that, in time, everything would all work out. But I would have to sweat it out. After this, I adapted.

In 1953, after years of study at St. John's University, I met David R. Felderman. He was very kind to me. His business was investing and he got our family started in business. Everyone in the family worked hard. My father, as I said, could never drive again after my accident, but he pitched in with us and we managed to get the business going very successfully.

By 1961, I was getting along quite well. I was cabareting with friends and living what some of the world calls "the good life." All this came to an abrupt end. One day while sitting in a bar with some friends I heard things that just disgusted me completely. I walked out and took a taxi home. My family doctor, who knew me quite well, suggested that I take a vacation since I was exhausted.

Why not? I thought. By now I had a successful business going. Money was no problem. Although I knew that I was not exhausted, I was unhappy, empty and lonely.

My cousin and a group of his friends were going to Europe. He invited me and, since this was just what the doctor ordered, I went along. We rollercoasted through Europe, living the high life. While we were visiting relatives in Italy, in order to please an uncle of mine, but against my wishes, we went to see Padre Pio.

He was a Capuchin monk who had the stigmata, was also able to read hearts, and had other spiritual gifts, even bilocation.

The mass which was celebrated by Padre Pio lasted about two hours. After mass, Padre Pio would pass through a particular area where men only were permitted to assemble in order to receive his blessing. My uncle took me there. Amidst all the men assembled, he walked over to me; embraced me and called me by name. "Joey, I am so glad to see you and so happy that you are here." Then he blessed me and left. I didn't even know who had embraced me. My uncle Frank told me that it was Padre Pio, but by then he had already left. I was amazed. I said to my uncle, "How did he know my name?" My uncle was as

amazed as I was. This really made an impression on me.

In February of 1963, accompanied by a friend, I returned to see Padre Pio. My religious life had fallen by the wayside again. I was saying my prayers but not attending mass regularly. During this trip I had a strong desire to confess my sins to Padre Pio.

I do not speak Italian well, but I do understand it. I realize now that my desire to have Padre Pio hear my confession had been inspired. The confession took place in a face-to-face manner. Even though I am blind, I still found this manner of confessing to be embarrassing. I was afraid that he would say that I was bad. Twice, in Italian, he said, "Joey, confess." I didn't say a word. I was just too embarrassed as I knew that he was a special man. Then he held my hand and in perfect English he told me every sin I had ever committed; even where and with whom. Something was beginning to happen to me. I can't explain it too well, but I was receiving the grace of the understanding of the ugliness of these sins; yet I seemed to freeze while I listened. Then he said, "Joey, are you sorry?" "Yes, I am," and I was truly sorry. He then said, "I call Jesus and Mary for you." My eyes felt as though they were spinning in my head. When he gave me absolution, my entire body had a strange sensation. He held up his hand and I kissed it. I was thirty-three at the time and I felt like sixteen after leaving him. On my way out, Padre Pio said, "A little patience and a little courage, and you will be okay." I was so relieved, as I had a firm purpose of amendment and I was truly sorry. Sin had made me suffer. I felt great and do to this day. I receive holy communion every day.

Two days later, on February 18, while kneeling with a group of men to receive Padre Pio's blessing, I got the scent of roses as he passed by me. Because of the accident, I had lost my sense of smell, and so this was like an explosion to me. I backed up against the wall and put my hands to my face to protect myself. Padre Pio came over and took my arms down and, touching the bridge of my nose, he said, "Joey, don't be afraid." Until this day, thank God, I have my sense of smell. The doctors do not understand it because my olfactory nerves are severed. It is like having electricity without any wires. But that is the way it is. I have my sense of smell. Padre Pio had also said, "I cannot give you physical sight, but spiritual sight for your soul." I thanked him very much and was happy, as a spiritual healing is most important.

During this time my friend kept asking me to go to Garabandal. I didn't want to go but had promised him, before coming to Europe, that I would. I had said to him, "Why should we go, since miracles are happening right here? We do not know if what we have heard about Garabandal is even true." He asked me to ask Padre Pio and I agreed to do that. The next day I asked Padre Pio if it was true that the Blessed Mother was appearing to four girls in Garabandal. He said yes. "Do you think that I should go to see them?" "Yes, why not?"

That was all I needed to hear. We went right to Garabandal. On my first visit there, I met Conchita and her family. We immediately became friends. I had already believed in the events of Garabandal, since Padre Pio had told me it was so.

When we returned to the States, I had a burning desire to tell everyone. I was happy

now and wanted everyone else to be happy. My friend put a slide show together: four or five slides of Padre Pio, followed by slides of the children in ecstasy. Whenever we were invited, we would go to people's houses to present the slides. I was very nervous about it, since I had never even been in a school play. My friend was technically blind, but he could run the camera with what vision he had and I would talk with this rough voice. It was really a case of the blind leading the blind. This was all we had, plus a pair of rosaries given to me which had been kissed by the Virgin. And then things really began to happen.

So you know that it was the Virgin who made this project grow.

Reports of healings were coming in from different parts of the world. Many people experienced the sweet odors. Full pilgrimages from places such as England witnessed the "spinning sun" at Garabandal.

In those days I was quite happy, although it was difficult. This was all that I wanted to do, except for making two or three trips to Garabandal each year. Slowly but surely, Our Lady sent people to help us. By 1978, which was the year of our last public conference (that's what I call these slide presentations and talks), there were centers developed in forty states. These centers were spreading the message of Garabandal.

To date, we have visited twenty countries. Through prayer and the intercession of the Virgin, people all over the world are working to spread the message. God only knows how many, but I estimate millions.

One day, in March of 1964, while in Garabandal, I hesitated to ask Conchita a question which was on my mind. I did not want Conchita to think that I was a bit strange — thinking I was having visions or anything like that. I related the story about the voice I had heard when I was home in bed recuperating and the dream I had after the fall in the blind school. She said, "I will ask the Virgin."

On April 1, 1964, my Spanish neighbor translated a letter which I received from Conchita, dated March 19. It began this way.:

"Dear Joey,

"Today in a locution at the pines, the Virgin told me to tell you, 'The voice you heard was hers.' And that you would receive new eyes on the day of the great Miracle. Also, that the house of charity which you will establish in New York will bring great glory to God."

That's about the whole story. Have you any questions?

Since Padre Pio, who was also mentioned in connection with the great Miracle, died in 1968, I asked Joe what kind of doubts did he experience.

Not one bit. It upset many people, but not me. From the day that Padre Pio said it was true, I have never doubted it. You know, months after his death, it was learned from some monks who had cared for him that he did see the Miracle in a vision. Besides that, the Blessed Mother only said that he would see the Miracle; not that he would be alive to see it.

I then told Joe about the letter from the Sacred Congregation which expresses disapproval of the Garabandal centers. Joe's continued activity would indicate that he was being disobedient.

Let me answer that. You don't have to read it to me. I am well familiar with it. First of all, you, as well as many people, have interpreted the third paragraph, where it says local Ordinary, to mean the Bishop of Santander; it does not, it means the local Ordinary of any community in which one would like to spread the message. We never go anywhere when the local bishop does not permit us to. Second of all, that is a letter, not an official decree. The Holy Office has never said anything negative about Garabandal. However, the letter did upset me and many others. I met with an international group of priests in Rome to get to the bottom of it. I was accompanied by our center's late and beloved spiritual director, Father Archangel, and two other priests. The entire group was told that we were permitted to promote Garabandal, as long as we stated that it was under investigation. So that is all there is to that.* *(Joe Lomangino's answer to the question of obedience is correct. Since there is no official position of the Church, the local authority can either permit or refuse permission to promote Garabandal.) Of course, I am obedient.

I next asked him to tell me about Conchita's meeting with the Pope in 1966.

Conchita was invited to Rome by Cardinal Ottaviani. He was the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. She was interviewed. An Italian research scientist, Professor H. Medina, a personal friend of Pope Paul VI, and Conchita stood in a prearranged place during the Pope's public audience, which takes place every Wednesday. When the Holy Father came near this spot, he said to Conchita, "I bless you, and through me, the whole Church blesses you."

Conchita requested to see the Pope. At first her request was granted, but then it was denied. However, for one reason or another, the Pope sent for Conchita the next day. They had a strictly private meeting. No one knows what was said at this meeting, except for one thing. The Pope repeated the same blessing he had given her earlier. Most "private audiences" do not mean that one is completely alone with the Pope, but Conchita really had a private visit. Someday we will learn what took place.

Recalling the story of the cilice, I asked Joe how he feels about penance.

Imagine the penance Conchita has been going through since she first felt the doubt on August 15, 1967. She has probably been tormented all these years. To me, that is penance. Working hard, being accused of wrongs you haven't done, but yet there is always someone who thinks you did. For instance, some woman accused my wife and I of traveling abroad at the expense of the Garabandal Centers. I have never made any money on this. We pay our own way. Whatever comes into the centers is used to further the message. When someone tries to help another in need, sometimes he or she is accused of looking for something in return — when, in fact, they just want to be kind. All these little hurts are forms of penance.

FATHER RAMÓN ANDREU†

†(While I was interviewing Father Ramón Andreu, he made one point very clear. That is that too many speakers and authors insert their own thoughts and opinions into the events.)

It has been two years now since I have been to the village of Garabandal. The work

that I am involved in, due to my priestly duties, occupies all my time. The question most often asked of me is, “Do you believe in the apparitions of Garabandal?” I cannot count how many times this question has been asked. I will never answer such a question, because my personal beliefs should make no difference. I could be right or I could be wrong. Of course, the reason they ask me is because of my brother, Father Luis. Here, I want to be very clear. Conchita has never said anything other than that after the Miracle my brother’s body will be found as incorrupt as the day he was buried. So the reports that his body is now a skeleton has nothing to do with the events. As a matter of fact, even if on that day it is found in a corrupt state, it could not affect things. Logically, how could it if we have had the Warning and the Miracle? But other than that, the girls on occasion, could have been wrong.

I witnessed many people push these girls until they were exhausted, and in a state of confusion they would answer. Certainly, one cannot take these answers seriously. Just listening to the way these people would repeat their questions in order to obtain the answers they wanted to hear also confused me. The girls were never left alone.

Today, the same thing is occurring with the stories. They are being switched around and switched around until you don’t know what happened. Whenever I did speak in public about the events, I never used any words other than the “Vision.” When I related the story of how I heard Conchita say the Hail Mary in Greek, I would never refer to the Vision as the Blessed Mother or Our Lady, because that would be interpreted as if I knew. I let people decide for themselves. But, anyhow, I only know that the children were in a state that was certainly out of normal life and into another kind of situation. I have witnessed several of these occasions. But they are over now and they should be told as they were, without reading anything into them. I have read stories that said the children were even flying. Ridiculous, but phenomena have always attracted many strange people. One can, many times, hunger for just a few people who would discuss the events seriously.

The writing I can recommend is “Conchita’s Diary,” which I agree with entirely. That is, her plain, simple diary without any of the comments or authors’ opinions. I have read some which are ludicrous. There is one that has more pictures of the author than anything else. That is how it is today. People are shuffling for some type of importance for themselves in connection with the events, and once again, I want to say that they are over.

The five main principals in the events are the four visionaries and my brother. What part they will play in the future events of Garabandal remains to be seen. That is, if the Miracle happens, and if it doesn’t, that’s another story. For the time being, we can only say what has happened, not what will happen. Let us not act as though God is not able to take care of things. I really get angry at what some people have taken the liberty of writing and saying and pray that it will stop. May this book be to the honor and glory of God.

Chapter 12

CONCHITA RECALLS SPECIAL ENCOUNTERS, THE RENEWAL

MOVEMENT AND THE DEATH OF LUIS ANDREU

[Back to Top](#)

Conchita's daughter received her first Holy Communion at a small convent located in a very bad section of the South Bronx. It is a convent founded by Mother Teresa of Calcutta. The mass was concelebrated by Bishop Garmendia and Father Nick Basile.

Mother Teresa was not present but, through conversation, it became quite evident that Conchita and mother Teresa had a mutual friendship.

The next time I spoke with Conchita, I inquired as to how they met and the extent of their friendship.

I met her through my husband, Pat. He has, for many years, helped out the nuns in his spare time. He does work around the convent and at times drives the nuns to their destinations. Mother Teresa is such a wonderful nun. I love being in her company. I also love to pray in the convent's chapel, as I always feel very close to Jesus there. Many of the conversations that we have are just of a simple nature. Mother Teresa is very conscious of obedience and knows that I have to also be obedient. So she always respects that fact.

You are asking me now, so I am answering you; otherwise, I never speak about our relationship. It is very similar to the other well-known people I have met. For instance, the meeting with the Holy Father when I was summoned to Rome. I was asked not to speak of it and I never have. The priest who accompanied us on the trip told what took place. That is why it is in the books. The same is true with Padre Pio. Even though I was never asked to keep our meeting a secret, I did not speak of it. Yet I was accused of it (speaking with him). Many different authors wrote of it. I have never read any of the written material. So I do not know what they have said. I really do not like to see people associate Garabandal with other things. Because it looks to me as if they are trying to exploit the other things to prove Garabandal. Maybe, after the Miracle, it will be okay. I really didn't know that I was going to meet Padre Pio. When we were in Rome, I could not get an audience with the Pope on the day it was planned. A man asked if I would like to meet Padre Pio. I agreed, but only because I wanted to see the countryside. To me, Padre Pio was not a special priest. I saw him in a private room. I only remember a couple of things. He was very nice. There was a man taking pictures and clicking away before he spoke to Padre Pio. Saying, "Is it all right if I take pictures?" Padre Pio made me laugh with his reply. "Don't you think I can hear your machine?" I had my crucifix and showed it to him, telling him that Our Blessed Mother had kissed it. He took it in his hand and then took my hand and put it over his. When we were leaving he came out in his wheelchair to say so long. There was a very long corridor. I turned back, and until we were out of sight he kept giving us his blessing. I really liked him as a priest but felt nothing special then. After he died, I was given a veil which was used to cover his face, as he was laid out in his coffin. When I was home, making a note of this event, the entire room filled with a beautiful scent. I experienced a feeling of joy.

From that moment, I believed everything regarding his Miracles and all happenings concerning Padre Pio.

Since I realized that Conchita would still remain silent in obedience to her promise of 1966, I told her exactly what Joe Lomangino had said to me with regard to her visit with the Pope. She agreed that that was how it was. I then related the entire interview which I had with Joe Lomangino.

I heard about these things: “the spinning sun,” “healings” and the “sweet odors.” I have even received many letters from all over the world. But I cannot comment one way or the other, since I was not present. None of these happenings really interest me. The only thing which I pray for is that people live the message. Maybe other people are being helped through these things. I believe that the Virgin came to Garabandal for the entire world. She hardly ever told me personal things. When I smelled the perfume scent while writing my notes about Padre Pio, although I do not understand these things, I realized that it was a personal message for me. So, if these things are happening, maybe they are for personal reasons. I don’t know. When I ask anything about Garabandal, it is only questions such as: How is so-and-so? or Did you see so-and-so? Nothing with regard to the events. I like it best when people do not ask me questions!

I wanted to explore with Conchita the phenomena associated with the Charismatic Renewal Movement, “The Holy Spirit dwells actively in the Church. This makes the Church essentially a Charismatic Church.” Conchita is very well versed in religious matters regarding the Roman Catholic Church and does not hesitate to speak her mind on any of them.

Yes, but you are speaking about the Renewal Movement. I have had some people interpret this as though the Holy Spirit had gone somewhere for a while or had never been here. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation. If the Pope said that we should all join the Charismatic Renewal Movement, then I would. I have attended two Charismatic masses, but I did not feel comfortable. They are too noisy for me, at least the ones I attended. They are not for me. Personally, I feel one must be silent to hear Jesus. But that is how I feel. God gives different graces to people. One time when I was in a beach resort area I saw many people going to mass in their bathing suits and shorts. I thought that this was not modest. When I received communion, I got the feeling that I was worse than everyone for thinking this way of people. God may not mind at all. It is true that the Virgin taught us modesty, but also charity to one another. I was not being charitable. So, please understand me, what seems wrong to me may be right for someone else.

Today, we have many ways to know what the Pope is saying, such as good Catholic magazines and newspapers. And we must listen to him. There is no excuse for not knowing what is required. Some people today are not obeying for different reasons: misunderstanding teachings, being misinformed and, of course, others simply do not care. Most of this will stop when the new code of canon law is signed. I do not join any movements within the Church because, unless they are well supervised, there is always a possibility of a schism. I cannot speak for other religions, but for Roman Catholics it is very simple; we do as the Pope directs. With the changes in the mass after Vatican II, I had a very difficult time, since I was so used to following along with my own missal. But I survived. I knew many people who would not go along with the changes. This is not right. I would not call these people Roman Catholics. One of my best friends who was away from the Church is now back and very happy about it. She came back through the Charismatic Renewal Movement. So for

her, it is a beautiful movement.

I asked Conchita if she heard the stories these days regarding people who have been pronounced clinically dead and then returned to life. Conchita shrugged her shoulders, not understanding how the question related to anything. "I have heard some," she said, "But I do not know of all the details. I have only heard people in conversation about it."* * (This interview took place with Conchita in January 1983.)

I then asked her to recall what she could about Father Luis Andreu.

In 1961, Father Luis Andreu came to Garabandal with his brother, who is also a priest, Father Ramón. They came without the least bit of belief in the apparitions. During some of the visits they witnessed the ecstasies. While witnessing one of the ecstasies, Father Ramón said that he considered a gesture made by Mary Loli as a sign for him that these apparitions were authentic. This occurred during an ecstasy of Mary Loli and Jacinta. I am not exactly sure what happened to him, but I believe that at this time nothing happened to Father Luis. I don't even think that this made Father Ramón a believer, only less of a skeptic.

On August 8, since our pastor had some business which took him out of town, Father Luis said the mass. I was present with Jacinta and Mary Loli. I remember how beautifully he celebrated the mass. We had an ecstasy that afternoon. People have told me that Father Luis was very near us and even though he was taking notes, as he usually did, he seemed extremely absorbed in the ecstasy. They also told me that his eyes were tearing. That night another ecstasy took place in church. I am told that we made an ecstatic march, stopping to pray at spots where previous ecstasies had taken place. This march ended at the pines where it was reported that Father Luis became excited and cried out, "Miracle! Miracle!" I think, while in ecstasy, we saw Father Luis, but I really can't recall now. But I know that he was seeing what the great promised Miracle will be. The following day the four of us were sweeping out the church when Jacinta's mother arrived and was very upset. She told us, "Father Luis Andreu has died." † † (Father Luis Andreu died while riding in a car on a trip from Garabandal. His actual last words were: "I feel myself truly full of joy and happiness. What a gift the Virgin has given me. How fortunate to have a Mother like her in heaven! We should not have any fear of the supernatural life. We should learn to act toward the Virgin as the children do. They have given us an example. I cannot have the least doubt about the truth of their visions Why has the most Holy Virgin chosen us! Today is the happiest day of my life.")

We could not believe it since we had seen him the day before. Leaving the church half swept, we rushed to find out more. They said that when he was about to die his last words were: "Today is the happiest day of my life. What a good Mother we have in heaven." I believe Father Luis was only thirty-six years old.

In a later ecstasy, after the death of Father Luis, the Virgin told us that he would come and speak to us. The Virgin was smiling, as usual. He came and called us one after the other. But we didn't see him. We only heard his voice. It was exactly the same as when he spoke on earth. After giving us advice, he told us something for his brother, Father Ramón. He also taught us words in French and even to pray in Greek. He taught us words in German and in English too. ‡ ‡ (Many people witnessed the girls reciting words in foreign languages.) After a while we didn't hear his voice anymore. Then the Virgin spoke again to us and then left.

He spoke to us on other occasions. His brother, Father Ramón, was present on a

couple of these occasions. He, to my knowledge, could not hear Father Luis, but he heard us responding.

On October 18, 1961, Father Ramón experienced great doubts. This came as a surprise to me since he had seen so much. He came to the village with some friends. It was the day of the first message. It was raining very heavily and many thousands of people were there.

Late at night, after the message had been read, he came to my house. I was already in bed, but my mother showed him to my room. I asked him, “Are you still sad?”

He said, “I don’t know. Mary Loli told me that the Virgin spoke to you about me. Is it true?”

“Oh yes! For a long time.”

“What did she tell you?”

“I can’t tell you all, but I can tell you this: that when you went up to the pines you were happy, on the way down you became sad. The Virgin told me about the thoughts which you had during your walk down from the pines, such as, I shall not return to Central America — I don’t want to hear anything further about such-and-such a thing. The Virgin told me to tell you about your thoughts so that you would never doubt again.”

The next day I pointed out to him, on a photo of the area, where each thought had occurred to him. There may be some other things we spoke of, but I am not sure at this time.

In a locution, I was told that on the day “after” the Miracle Father Luis Andreu’s body will be found to be “incorrupt.” Since then, there have been reports saying that his body was exhumed and found to be corrupt. I know of these reports. I also know that I was told by the Virgin that the day after the Miracle his body will be found to be “incorrupt.”

Chapter 13

PHENOMENA AFTER THE APPARITIONS

[Back to Top](#)

On my desk there are signed affidavits by people who can be classified as reliable sources. They state that they have witnessed paranormal happenings in recent years connected with Garabandal. I have been assured by people from Garabandal Centers that hundreds more are available. These reports speak of three types of phenomena: “miracle healings,” “odors of sanctity” and the “spinning sun.”

As mentioned earlier, Conchita has refused to comment on these happenings, other than that she

has heard about them. But since she was never present during these happenings, she cannot talk about them one way or the other. They are mentioned here neither to authenticate the events of Garabandal nor to discredit them. Rather since they have been reported widely, it is worthwhile at least to be aware of them.

I have looked into these three types of phenomena quite extensively. As to the miraculous healings, many medical doctors with whom I have spoken have no argument about the cures, even in the most critical cases of disease. As there are many doctors who state that a miraculous intervention took place, there are as many who refuse to say this. The most common reason given for the latter is that the human body reversed the disease.

I spoke with one doctor who is quite a religious man. He told me that he has never investigated any of these cases. He does not have the time, but he added that when he sees or hears of an amputated limb growing back he might take time out to look into it. Until then, he will work and pray.

The “odor of sanctity” which many people connected with Garabandal have described, and which Joe Lomangino and Conchita have said they experienced, is extremely common. I have experienced it while speaking with a woman connected with a religious phenomenon other than Garabandal.

One day, at Conchita’s house, we were speaking of Padre Pio and she told me that, at times, when she showed visitors Padre Pio’s veil they would experience the “sweet smell of roses.” She showed the veil to me but I did not smell any odor. I put my nose very close to it and Conchita jestingly said that one can smell it without any effort; it wasn’t necessary to sniff that hard.

As to the “spinning sun,” or, as it is commonly referred to, “the spinning disc,” this phenomenon has been reported in many countries at different times. Here there is the problem of separating it from a religious occurrence or some other phenomenon, simply because one does not know what is occurring in the entire area. There are reports of isolated bystanders witnessing such miraculous phenomena, irrespective of any religious group participation.

The most famous of these cases* *(Fátima would not enter into this category since this was preannounced by the visionaries and was unquestionably a religious phenomenon.) of the “spinning sun,” which was widely covered by the newspaper media, took place in Wales in 1905. These stories of the “spinning disc” and strange lights in the sky poured into official government offices. Since there was a religious revival in this country at the time, some people believed that the phenomena were connected with the revival.

As already mentioned, the phenomena of “healing” and the “spinning sun” have often been reported at Garabandal or through the Garabandal movement. The following are two such testimonies.

The first is from Mrs. Helen Outlaw of Melbourne Beach, Florida. I spoke with her on February 3, 1983.

In 1974, I retired from the school system with plans of enjoying my retirement by vacationing, sight-seeing and reading. My eyes had been troubling me. They were very rapidly becoming more painful. My doctor suspected that my eyes had been permanently damaged. An examination at the Watson Clinic verified this. What was happening was that my eyelids would stick to my eyes; tearing the eyes. I would now have to put drops in my eyes every hour and a salve at night to prevent them from sticking. This was to be it from

here on in.

I had read about Garabandal and we visited there in 1974. In 1975, I acquired Joe Lomangino's phone number and called him. I told him that we would be in the New York area and he invited us over to his house. During 1975 he was having prayer meetings and conferences one night a week. At the end of these meetings, he would invite people up to venerate his medal from Garabandal. When I approached him, I told him of my eye problem. He placed the medal on my eyes. I prayed to myself, "Lord, if You want to help me, I promise never to look at any unclean thing again, but use my eyes for a better purpose."

By the time we returned to the motel, my eyes were no longer bothering me and never have since. However, that night I still put the salve in my eyes.

While driving back to Florida the next day, we were playing the tape of Joe's conference, which ran about two hours. I forgot about my drops and until this day have never had need for them.

When I arrived home, I returned to the doctor. After his examination, he said, "Helen, what have you been doing with your eyes?" I felt strange about telling him what had happened. I guess many people feel this way, instead of praising God. Then the doctor told me that my eyes were like new — not one trace of scar tissue. I was elated and then I told him about the Miracle, and have been saying so ever since. Wherever I go, I speak about God. It has changed my entire family's lives. We have gone to Garabandal every year since. One year, we went twice. We bought property over there five years ago and have built a trailer home there. My husband, of course, believes in the events of Garabandal. We were both Baptists and I suppose that is as far apart as one Christian denomination can be from the other. I converted to Catholicism many years before my husband, Belville. Although he was always with me, he did not convert until 1978. I know that God loves us all equally, but the sacraments are so beautiful, especially the Eucharist. Today, I produce a semi-monthly half-hour television program about religion. Let us both pray that the people hear the message and begin to live better lives.

About the "spinning sun," I spoke first with Dr. Sidney Bullard of Jefferson, Louisiana, on February 4, 1983. Although he had not witnessed the phenomenon, he was, in his words, "a firm believer in Our Lady of Garabandal" and now has a center in Louisiana for spreading the message. His wife, Wanda, had seen the "spinning sun" and related her story as follows.

Two lady friends and I were with the (Garabandal) tour in the summer of 1981. While we were walking around, I looked up at the sun and it seemed like it was spinning around. It had different colors. It seemed to have a dark disc in front of it, which turned into a grayish color with three little white spots. I turned to one of my lady friends and said, "Look at the sun." She said that she did not see anything but that she could see the look on both of our faces. She knew that we had seen something. I turned to my other lady friend and the many different colors were reflecting on her face: orange, gold and rose. We watched this for twenty minutes while it kept spinning. I had such a strange feeling seeing all this. Things seemed to stay still as this was going on.

The next day we saw the same effect over the trees as we sat on the tour bus. My friend who had seen it the day before was sitting behind me. So I turned around to see if she had noticed it and indeed she had. It seemed like such a peaceful feeling in spite of the fact that the sun was going around and so forth. I have been going to Garabandal since 1969 and never before had I experienced anything of this sort.

I had been a very sick lady some years back. This was after I had been to Garabandal several times. I had a tumor where my large and small intestines meet. It ruptured and I developed peritonitis. I had tubes in my stomach. They could not keep the enzyme from coming out and it burned all the skin off my stomach. I was in a very bad way. Most of my small intestines had been removed. I had six operations; developed bleeding ulcers, went into shock, contracted hepatitis, just one thing after the other. I was in the hospital for five months. During my stay at the hospital, Joe (Lomangino) came to visit and he brought his Garabandal medal with him. I recovered. I do not say it was because of the medal. I was praying to Our Blessed Mother. Nothing has returned. Thank God. I do love Garabandal.

If you don't mind, I would like to have my friend contact you, because she can tell you about the sun.

The following is the letter sent to me from Wanda's lady friend, Rita Burch of Metairie, Louisiana.

In August of 1981, I was on a pilgrimage with Joe Lomangino's group to Garabandal, Spain. I witnessed a spectacular event concerning the sun.

Late on the afternoon of August 26, 1981, I was in the home of Maximina, Conchita's aunt, when my friend, Wanda Bullard, came and asked my roommate and me to accompany her to Serafina's home.

A short distance from Maximina's home, Wanda said to us, "Look at the sun," and when I looked up, I could look at the sun which did not hurt my eyes. I saw a very bright rim around the sun which resembled the silver of the clouds on a summer day. The inside of the sun was a very dark blue color, almost black, which was spinning very fast clockwise and sometimes seemed to turn greenish in color. Behind the sun were radiated colors of gold. It was a beautiful gold, and at times a deep rose. The colors were reflected in our faces. When I turned to look at my friends, their faces were, at times, this beautiful gold color, and at times a very deep rose. Even the earth took on these colors and the roofs of the houses were just beautiful. For a short duration, I saw the sun take on jagged or pointed edges and it seemed to move from side to side. I also saw rays extending which seemed to almost touch the earth. There were exquisite colors of a rainbow. Colors I cannot begin to describe. They were so beautiful. The phenomenon lasted for about twenty minutes.

The next day, I witnessed almost the same thing on the bus in the vicinity of Garabandal.

This was my first trip to Garabandal. I thank Our Heavenly Mother and Our Lord for giving me this great gift, which left such a beautiful imprint on my mind.

Chapter 14

CONCHITA NOW

[Back to Top](#)

My initial plan in preparing this book included an interview with Patrick, Conchita's husband. I thought that in this way we would be able to become familiar with Conchita's way of life today. However, he gracefully declined, stating that he really had nothing to do with the events. This is very true, and brings up another question. Who really does have anything to do with them today?

Conchita herself has answered that question. Her answer is that one must be obedient to the religious authorities. While it is perfectly all right to talk and write about the events, it should go no further than that until the proper authorities decide. So that question is answered. For the time being, "we wait."

Now to the question of Conchita today. God knows this has been the most difficult of all the chapters. The approach finally taken here is to present, very candidly, a synopsis of the moments I have spent with Conchita during the past year and the personal dialogue, including some excerpts from telephone conversations. These are "scenes," then, typical of Conchita's current everyday life.

ÿ On one occasion I asked Conchita a question that in my mind pertained to the events. She perceived it as an ordinary question, not one pertaining to the events. The question was, "What is the most important thing we must do?" "Keep the Commandments," she replied. This sums up the way she lives her life today. People who think that she lives it waiting for the Miracle are misinformed. She does not. Her life is well anchored in basic religious beliefs. If you lived in her neighborhood and observed her, you would simply see an average wife and mother who practices her religion. Conchita has stated to me, "I don't know how anyone gets through the joys and trials of life without prayer. I would rather have not had the experiences, because it is so much nicer just to love God."

ÿ On Friday nights she holds a holy hour with an average of thirty friends. She expressed mixed emotions about this because many times other people show up to see her, rather than for the holy hour itself. She feels that the holy hours are important but wishes that they were held in church. On first Fridays of the month when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed in church, she prefers to stay there if circumstances permit. At such times, the holy hour at her house goes on without her. She requests that the priests who come to lead the holy hour be dressed in their clerical clothes. She does not believe that priests should wear regular street clothes.

ÿ She constantly has visitors and always finds the time to be cordial. She enjoys the conversation, but when it concerns the events, she seems only too glad to get up and go to the kitchen and prepare coffee or find some other chore to do. I have met bishops, priests and nuns from many different countries at her home.

ÿ She enjoys picnics and small parties with her close friends. She teaches Spanish to a small

group of children at her house. Her circle of friends is quite small. I once discussed a problem a friend of mine was having. Since he was well known in the entertainment field, he was very perplexed, wondering who liked him for himself. Conchita commented, "I understand his feelings completely. This is so very true in my life, not so much who likes me as who to trust, even priests. In the beginning I trusted every priest. Later on some of them made up statements which I never made, saying that I did. Then some would even become jealous of each other, claiming closeness to the events. It is sad. Don't forget, as a little girl, I never even understood why the Virgin requested us to pray for priests. I could never realize that they had a human nature. Now, I am very careful, but still I trust the wrong people sometimes. It takes time to really know people. So you love them all but keep your trust in God. One should pray for liars and such. Some have even said that Garabandal is condemned by the Church. Of course, it is not and never has been.

ÿ Another time during the taped interview for this book, I asked Conchita if I would be correct in stating that she knew that the Warning preceded the Miracle. "Oh no!" she replied. "The only thing I know which you can state is that the Warning comes first, before the Miracle, then the Miracle." It is absolutely essential to understand that, although Conchita speaks English she sometimes misunderstands words and is sometimes misunderstood. This may be the reason why some people have gone away thinking she has said something she hasn't.

ÿ With regard to Padre Pio, Conchita has told me, "When Padre Pio died, I was really confused more than I was doubting. People who were trying to comfort me gave me different reasons for this, one being that the Virgin never said that he would be alive to see it. One day I learned that a priest who had lived where Padre Pio lived was visiting here in New York. I was invited over to someone's house where this priest would be. I really wanted to see him and ask him some questions and to request a picture of Padre Pio and me for my own album. By this time it had already been reported that Padre Pio had seen the Miracle before he died. I really don't remember now why, but I was no longer confused in that area. This priest was sitting at a table talking with some people. When I was introduced to him he looked at me in a very annoyed manner and said, 'What do you want?' I said that I wanted to speak with him. 'Then just wait until I'm ready.' Then he looked away from me. So I just stood there and I was beet red. I did not expect this, but got it just the same. He spoke with everyone who came up to see him and left me standing alongside him for over an hour. Then, still with anger in his voice, he said, 'Okay, what is it you want?' We spoke for a long time and it turned out that his anger was justified because of the many false things he had heard. By the time I sat down to speak with him I was engulfed with anger. Our conversation began with both of us holding back our anger. I did a better job at it than he did. Wow, was he annoyed at me! Now we are very good friends. He did not give me the copy of the picture I requested but agreed to give it to me after Padre Pio's beatification. His concerns are in order, as I have seen pictures of myself with people I have never met, and some of them I would never want to meet, published in newspapers."

ÿ We drove about two hundred miles to attend the twenty-fifth anniversary mass of a priest we both know. This trip was somewhat different from the auto trip we had made together ten years ago. For one thing, it wasn't Conchita who started the Rosary, it was her daughter Conchi. Conchita's other two daughters, Conchita's lady friend and my youngest daughter, Joan, age seven, also accompanied us on the trip. Many miles and many Rosaries later, Conchita said to Conchi, "Let's say another Rosary for a special intention." My daughter said, "Not another one." It was obvious that "the apple does not fall far from the tree." I had entertained that thought many

times on the trip to Fátima. Another difference now was that Conchita seemed extra nervous and upset. I found out later why she had been upset. Her daughter Miriam was running a slight fever. Before we ventured out, Conchita thought that she was and had given her aspirin. Although she did not say anything to me while we were driving along, she noticed some reddish spots on Miriam. The day after we returned from this trip I stopped at Conchita's house. Miriam's face was covered with chicken pox. She answered the door and I thought that she looked real cute with her red spots and her big smile. I guess, like all children, she was happy because she had a holiday from school. Conchita explained that she had never expected it to be chicken pox and was concerned because it was not advisable to give aspirin to children who had chicken pox. This was why she had been upset on the trip.

ÿ On another occasion, a group of Conchita's friends had a barbecue. She told me that the next day that they had a grand time and that the food was fabulous. However, part of her day was ruined by someone who had a little too much to drink. He picked her out to tell his tale of troubles to. If you have ever had this happen to you, you know how annoying it can be. Also, Conchita does not like to see anyone overdrinking, even to the slightest degree.

ÿ This brings to mind another event. One day Conchita wanted me to get her some literature in Spanish about Alcoholics Anonymous. She wanted to give it to someone whose drinking was or might become a problem. The A.A. meeting was held, as many of these meetings are, in a church meeting room, although this is not a religious organization. The man I spoke with had such a strong Spanish accent that I had difficulty understanding him. I explained this to Conchita and the next day we went together and obtained the information she needed. She holds the organization and work of A.A. in high esteem.

ÿ I called Conchita, by prearrangement, to let her know that Father Cizek, my wife and I were ready to leave my home on our trip to visit with her. She asked me to delay as long as possible as she was having her hair done. I did, but not long enough.

Pat greeted us at the door. I instantly recognized an odor which I have always found to be unpleasant. It was the smell of a home hair permanent. Conchita ran into the bedroom when the doorbell rang. We sat around the dining room table for a short while and then Conchita came out. She was accompanied by her friend, who was giving her the permanent. Her hair was up in rollers. She smiled and blushed. As she sat there, every once in a while some of the neutralizer would run down her face. She would pat it with a tissue and smile over at me, lifting her eyebrows as if to say, "Couldn't you have come twenty minutes later?" Pat was knowledgeable about Father Cizek and his experiences in the Russian prison camps, so he did most of the chatting. As Father related some of the stories about life in these prison camps, Conchita's eyes would take on that look of listening with great intensity. Though Conchita's girlfriend called her to the kitchen to rinse off the neutralizer, Conchita was too engrossed in the stories to move. She simply sat "dripping." The visit that was supposed to be for a half hour lasted almost two hours.

On the drive home, Father Cizek commented that though he was really not that familiar with the events at Garabandal, "they are a very lovely family and God is very much present."

The following are excerpts from telephone conversations I have had with Conchita.

ÿ "We have to take Conchita to the doctor today. You know that ear trouble she has had.

Well, the other day I noticed a bad odor coming from it. The doctor's office is in Manhattan. My girlfriend suggested that I take her to the Eye and Ear Hospital, as they are very familiar with this kind of children's trouble. Maybe she is right. I will see what the doctor says. He checked her ear when she was two years old. He is a very good doctor. I will call you later.

ÿ (Later) "The news doesn't sound that good to me. The doctor said that it is tuberculosis and that if this was Spain he would start treating her right now for it. But this is very rare in America. He is waiting for the results of a culture and called a specialist connected with the Eye and Ear Hospital. Say a special prayer to St. Joseph for Conchi."

"Besides my kitchen sink being clogged up, the washing machine is out of order. It's like a madhouse over here. I have Father Dominguez — remember him? He was the main celebrant at my wedding — coming for dinner tomorrow. This phone will not stop ringing. What a day! I do have some good news. My friend, one of the other priests that concelebrated at the wedding, Father David Arias, became a bishop in New Jersey. Oh, there's the doorbell. Call me later. No word on Conchi's culture yet, but I think everything is okay."* *(Conchi's tests came back negative. The infection was not in the channel and it could be treated with an antibiotic.)

Spoke to Conchita this evening. She was in a very happy mood. When I mentioned it to her, she said that it had not been that way earlier. It seemed that all week things had been going wrong. A good friend of hers and Pat's had called asking her to come to some prayer meeting. She refused and he asked how, after all he had done for her, she could refuse. She argued with him. "Sure you are nice to us, but this is religion and you should not have ever let that person talk you into calling me. The cause is a good cause, but I just don't want to be involved with her." Later, that person called. "I think she is a little crazy. She was yelling at me on the phone, saying 'The Holy Spirit wants you here.' I told her that the Holy Spirit knows where I am and knows that I pray for the same cause she does. But I don't have to be anywhere special to pray. It seems like all day I have been arguing. Then, to top things off, Father Dominguez, who I was preparing for all week, isn't coming. Because everyone wants to watch the Superbowl game."

I spoke with Conchita. She related a great story. A man visited her recently who came all the way from New Zealand.

"I felt so sorry for him. He had spent over two thousand dollars to come here. Can you imagine that? Added to this, he told me that the taxi driver got lost trying to find my house. When he told me that he made the trip just to see me, I felt even sorrier for him. He told me that he didn't care how much it cost him. He had seen the documentary twice in one day. I think it was on television. Before this, he knew nothing about religion and believed less. He said that nothing was going to stop him now. He showed me rosaries and scapulars which he had bought. He said that he had gone to my church and when people got up to get one of those "little white things," he also went up and received. Then he asked me, 'What do you call it? I forgot.' He was so sincere and determined. I almost fainted. I was more than surprised. When he said, 'Conchita, what should I do?' I was still thinking of his statement 'little white things.'

"It is called the Eucharist. You should see a priest. He will be able to help you.' I tried very hard to impress upon him the importance of the Eucharist. It was very difficult. He didn't even know the words "holy communion." But I am sure, with his determination, that he headed straight for a priest. His innocence impressed me. I know people who have had this type of hysteria; thinking that I can read

consciences, reaching over to touch me for luck or expecting a healing. These things are superstitious. I don't like that at all. Even many people with religious upbringing treat rosaries, scapulars and sometimes the Eucharist without proper reverence."

Spoke with Conchita today. She is down in the dumps because her daughter Anna María is sick, throwing up everything she eats. Conchita feels very tired herself. She told me that she feels sorry for her parish priest because hardly anyone comes to morning mass. She said that it is usually herself and about six older ladies. "Priests need support. It is not right this way. I always wonder why priests look into Garabandal or such events, but they need something for their faith, when we are not supporting them. Today is first Friday and the Blessed Sacrament will be honored after the seven o'clock evening mass. I want the holy hour over there. I don't want people coming just to see me, and some do. Tonight I will stay in church; for two reasons: one, because I want to be there with the Blessed Sacrament; two, to encourage them to come."

Then she said that the school tuition almost doubled. "The parents are angry. It is too high. I hope that they don't make it impossible. Anna is a very good student, but last week her marks dropped. She told the teacher that she would get killed if she didn't get 100. You shouldn't say that, I know. I'm too hard on her. Last week I slapped her for not knowing her lesson. I am wrong and feel badly. I spent the whole day hugging her, trying to make up."

Spoke with Conchita today. She is in a very good mood. I asked her a question regarding the manuscript.

"I thought you were finished. † †(I kept notes of all these conversations with Conchita. I told her about them and she generously granted permission to use them, provided that I did not mention any names. In this last conversation I mentioned that some of the delay was caused by my nervousness about getting any of the Blessed Mother's words wrong. Conchita said, "Oh, just be honest. She is not like that." What a relief it was to hear Conchita say that. I only wish that I had heard it sooner.) Gee, you are slow. I got a copy of one from Japan today. It's my favorite book because I can't read one word of it. There is a beautiful picture in it of Our Lady holding up the Church.

"Listen to what happened to my girlfriend last week. She was talking to a priest and she said, 'You know, Father, I think I'll be bored when I go to heaven.' So Father said, 'Oh, then go to hell.' Of course, they were only kidding, but I think it cured her of that thought. Oops, hold on, little Patrick just opened the door and let a stray dog in the house."

Chapter 15

THE DIARY

[Back to Top](#)

"Conchita then" is fairly uncomplicated to describe. While I was in Garabandal in 1972, I made several inquiries about her younger years. I learned that she was a very well-liked, playful child. Her school work was slightly above average. She worked hard at family chores but would rather be playing. Because the village could be considered one hundred percent Catholic, she was no stranger to the basics of religion.

This pretty much sums up the years of her life before June 18, 1961, when she was all of twelve years old. From that day until this very day, and for years to come, it becomes a job to sift out what is real about her life and what is not.

In this book and in most of the available works regarding the events of Garabandal, you will hear mention of "Conchita's diary." Conchita also refers to it as her diary. The fact is that, in the true sense of the word, it is not a diary at all. Conchita made entries about certain events, but she began this after August 1962, well over a year after the events began. Conchita, who is our main source in the story of Garabandal, considered this diary a main source for accuracy.

Many of the entries are without dates. Some authors have been able to add these dates, by simple detection of the contents, quite accurately, I think. I will not attempt to do that. What I will do is just refer to each new entry. The entire work contains only about sixty-five entries. Actually, some listed as new entries are continuations of previous ones. We have covered many parts of the recorded diary events with Conchita herself, in the early chapters. So, in order to avoid repetition, I will not enter them here, unless they help to clear up something Conchita had difficulty remembering. Conchita seemed more concerned with staying with the thought than trying to recall all the particulars associated with the event. Also worth remembering is the fact that she was a thirteen-year-old child while she was writing it.

In this book we have already covered all the entries between June 18, 1961 and late July 1961. The entries begin with June 18, 1961, though they were actually penned in August or September of 1962. Some of the highlights which we have covered are June 18: angel first appears. June 20: the brilliant light. June 24: the angel appears with sign. July 1: the angel announces that Our Lady of Mount Carmel will appear. July 2: the Virgin first appears. July 3: the Virgin brings Infant (although never told, the children refer to the Infant as the Baby Jesus). July 4: the Virgin gives message to the children to be made public on October 18, 1961. July 18, 1962: miracle of visible Host.

Conchita's Diary

(New Entry)

Two months prior to the message being made public, a priest by the name of Father Luis took me to Santander. The day before this trip to Santander, there were many people in Garabandal. Among them was a priest wearing a long white habit. I was greatly surprised, since this was the first time I had seen a white habit. My mother told me to ask the Virgin if she wanted me to go to Santander and I said I would.

By six o'clock in the evening the four of us had received two calls. A priest whose name is Father Don Alfonso Cebian had brought a bag of caramels for the four of us and we were sharing them when we received the third call. We all like caramels very much, but we dropped them on the road. But, by far, even though we all like caramels, to see the Virgin was more important than all else. Besides, the third call is something that carries us away in a manner one cannot understand and we would go to the place called the cuadro. Before we reached this spot, the Virgin appeared.

As we wanted to know who the priest was who came all dressed in white, we asked the Virgin. She didn't say anything, but only smiled. But we asked again and finally after a long while she said to us, "He is a Dominican."

I said, "A Dominican?"

"Yes," she answered.

That same day, I asked the Virgin if she would let me go to Santander. She did not forbid me to go.

That day the apparition lasted one hour, but to us it seemed like a single minute. She, herself, told us that she had been with us an hour.

(New Entry)

They wanted to take me to Santander because they claimed that I was the one who was influencing the others. They took me so that they could examine me.

On the first day there, I had an apparition near the Church of Our Lady of Consolation. There were many people present. The people were so numerous that the police had to keep control.

That day, after the apparition, various tests were performed on me. I was taken to an office where a doctor and a priest questioned me. The priest was Father Don Francisco de Odriozola. The doctor was Dr. Piñal.

Dr. Piñal said to me: "Why have you done those things? You are out of your mind — crazy — deceiving the world like that. Hold yourself straight and look at my nose. I am going to hypnotize you."

When I looked at his nose, I laughed.

Then he said to me, "Don't laugh. This is not a laughing matter."

That day they didn't do any more with me. The next day they took me to several doctors to see if I was sick. One doctor's name was Morales. They all told me that I was "well" and that this affair of the apparitions was all a dream. They also informed me that I was to stay in Santander, so that I could enjoy and amuse myself and forget everything and stop having apparitions.

My mother, satisfied with what the doctors had said to her, that there was nothing wrong with me, and other things that they told her, consented to my staying and went away.

Father Odriozola's nieces came each day to the house where I was staying. They took me to the fairgrounds and the beach. These things I have never seen before. As I went to the beach every day, the Virgin did not appear to me.

When eight days were ended, a gentleman intervened so that I could leave. My mother came to get me and take me away. The gentleman's name is Don Emilio del Valle Egochega. I shall remember him all my life.

This day when they came for me, I went to Dr. Pinal to tell him that I was going

away. He became very annoyed and said many things to me so that I would stay. I told him that I was not seeing the Virgin anymore, that I supposed the others were seeing her and that I thought the message was true. He asked me to sign what I had said, so I did. Then he told me to go tell it to Bishop Don Doroteo, which I did.

In all, they treated me very well.

(New Entry)

When I arrived at the village from my trip to Santander, many people and several priests came to meet me. Loli and Jacinta had learned in the course of an apparition that I was coming up the road at that time, which was true. They were in the church when the Virgin told them this. That same evening, Mari Cruz waited on the balcony of her home for the Virgin in the presence of many people.

(New Entry)

The following day, as my mother and I were returning from the field, my godmother, Maximina González, met us. She was very excited and said to us:

"Do you know that the voice of the Virgin has been recorded and heard on a tape recorder?"

"What did she say?" I asked.

She replied that Loli and Jacinta had asked her, "Speak, please speak?" And the people heard the answer: "No, I won't speak."

My godmother said that the people became very emotional because they were moved by having heard the Virgin's voice.

(New Entry)

While I was in Santander, two Jesuit priests, Father Ramón María Andreu and Father Luis Andreu, were in the village. They, like many others, came out of curiosity and not as believers in the least.

One day Loli and Jacinta had an apparition at the pines during the daytime. These priests were present. Seeing the two girls in ecstasy for a little while, Father Ramón had this thought:

"If this is authentic, let the apparition cease for one of them."

At that moment the vision ceased for Loli. Then a few moments later, the Virgin appeared to her again. The priest considered this as proof.

(New Entry)

During this vision, the four of us were together: Loli, Jacinta, Mari Cruz and I. There were also many other people there, including Father Ramon María Andreu, a seminarian,

Andres Pardo, and Father Royo Marin, a Dominican.

It was dark when the Virgin appeared to us. At the finish of the Rosary, the four of us went into ecstasy and we began to walk toward the pines.

When we arrived at the Pines, Father Luis María, who had been behind us, said, "Miracle, miracle." And he kept staring upward.

We could see him. Now, in our ecstasies, we never could see anyone. But we saw Father Luis and the Blessed Virgin told us that he was "seeing" her as well as the "Miracle." The people said that we recited the Creed. That was the first time the Virgin taught us to pray.

Then, still in ecstasy, we went down to the village. When we got to the church, we stopped seeing the Virgin. Since Mari Cruz had not seen her for several days, she remained in ecstasy with the Virgin and entered the church. When she arrived at the altar of Our Lady of the Rosary and of the archangel St. Michael, she started to say the Creed very slowly with the Virgin. Mari Cruz said that the Virgin took the lead and recited the prayer first, in order to teach her how to pray slowly. After the Creed she said the Hail Holy Queen and then she made the sign of the cross very slowly.

She spoke with the Virgin, saying, "I'm so glad that the Infant Jesus has come! It's been so long since he came! Why have you waited so long before coming to me and why do you come more often to the three others?"

This was heard by several people who were close to Mari Cruz, among whom were Father Luis María Andreu, a seminarian and Father Royo Marin.

(New Entry)

The following day the four of us went to sweep the church. While we were sweeping, Jacinta's mother arrived in a great state of excitement and said to us, "Father Luis María has died!"

We did not believe her, since we had seen him the day before. So we dropped our brooms and went to get more information. They say that as he was dying his last words were, "This is the happiest day in my life!"

Then he died. His death occurred on the way to Reinosa, after leaving San Sebastián de Garabandal. He was traveling in the same auto as Carmen Fontaneda and her husband Faito, and other people.

Father Luis' mother entered a convent of nuns within forty-eight hours after his death.

(New Entry)

A few days after the death of Father Luis, the Virgin told us that we were going to talk with him. August 15, Feast of Our Lady, was the day that this would take place. On

that day many people had come for an outing with the intention of carousing. Their conduct was of a scandalous nature. Father Luis María Andreu did not come. At four o'clock in the morning, which was the very hour that Father Luis had died, the Virgin appeared to me in our kitchen and said, "The father will not come today, but he will come tomorrow."

(New Entry)

The next day at eight or nine o'clock in the evening the Blessed Virgin appeared to us, smiling very, very much, as usual. She said to the four of us, "Father Luis will come now and speak with you." A moment later he came and called us one by one. We didn't see him at all, but only heard his voice. It was exactly like the one he had on earth.

When he spoke for a while, giving us advice, he told us certain things for his brother, Father Ramón María Andreu. He taught us words in French, German, English and he also taught us to pray in Greek.

After a while we didn't hear him anymore and the Blessed Virgin talked to us. She stayed for a moment and then went away. On that day, the Virgin told us that on the next day we would hear a voice and not to be afraid to follow the voice.

(New Entry)

The Blessed Virgin appeared the next day to all four of us, at the same hour as the previous day. She only smiled for a few minutes. Then we found ourselves in darkness. A voice called out to us and Mari Cruz said, "Tell us who you are. If you don't we will go home." The voice lasted. During this time, it was very "dark" and we didn't see the Blessed Virgin. After the voice stopped, the Blessed Virgin arrived and it became very bright. She said to us, "Don't be afraid!" She talked to us for a while, then, for the first time, she kissed us. She kissed us one by one and departed.

(New Entry)

The next day, almost at the same time, the Blessed Virgin appeared. The first thing she said was for us to say the rosary. The Virgin, as usual, took the lead. We never took the lead in reciting it. She said to us, "I am going to pray first and you will follow me."

The Virgin recited very slowly, "H-O-L-Y M-A-R-Y," and then we repeated, "H-O-L-Y M-A-R-Y." We prayed in that manner. When it was time to say Hail Mary and other parts of the Rosary prayers, we said them very slowly.

At the Hail Holy Queen she asked us to sing it, and we did. At the end of the Rosary, she gave us a kiss and departed, saying, "I will return tomorrow."

(New Entry)

She came the next day and once again told us to say the Rosary. So we started. That night the people told us that we went to the places where the Blessed Mother appeared at the beginning and then from place to place, praying in ecstasy, including kneeling, as we went from pine tree to pine tree. Up until this time we had all these ecstasies when the four

of us were together: Jacinta, Loli, Mari Cruz and myself, Conchita. But now the Blessed Virgin began to call us separately, each in our own home.

On one occasion Mari Cruz had already had an apparition first and had gone to bed. When the three of us saw the Blessed Virgin, we said to her, "Teach us to sing a song to Mari Cruz." Then we proposed one word and the Blessed Virgin added another. The following is one of the songs:

Get up, Mari Cruz, get up,
For the Good Virgin has come
With a little basket of flowers
For you, her little one.

Mari Cruz, Mari Cruz,
What sorrow you cause us!
Pray hard to the Blessed Virgin
So that she'll return to you.

Mari Cruz, Mari Cruz,
Don't throw away the white lilies.
The Blessed Virgin brought them to you.
So that you would be a better girl.

That night the Virgin was with us from nine in the night until seven in the morning and we played hide-and-seek with her. Two of us hid and the others went looking for them.

(New Entry)

During one of the apparitions, Loli and I were coming down from the pines, and there was a large crowd also, when we saw this fiery cloud. The people with us also saw it, as did others who were not with us. The Virgin told us that it was what she came in. In one of our other apparitions, which took place on the feast of Our Lady of Piliar, as Loli and I were looking at the Blessed Virgin, we saw beneath her feet a star with a very long trail. A number of other people saw it also. We asked the Virgin what it meant, but she never answered.

(New Entry)

There were times now that the three of us wanted to be together but couldn't because our parents would not allow us to stay out after dark. For this reason, occasionally, when we came from the Rosary after having received two calls, we would look up as if in ecstasy. In this way we were able to stay together after dark. Our parents and people would follow us. Then the Virgin would appear to us while we were together. We always ended up seeing the Virgin and we never faked an entire ecstasy.

(New Entry)

When we were together and one of our shoes would come off, the Blessed Virgin

would say to one of the others, "Put her shoe on." So we would put on each other's shoes. If one of us was alone and lost a shoe, she spent the entire apparition without it. At the end, the Blessed Virgin would tell her where the shoe, or whatever article was lost, could be found.

(New Entry)

We asked the Blessed Virgin to perform a miracle. She didn't say anything to us but only smiled. We insisted. Perform one so that the people will believe, because no one believes. She only smiled.

(New Entry)

The angel, St. Michael, at the beginning of the apparitions, would give us unconsecrated Hosts. Even though we had eaten shortly before, he gave them to us. This was to teach us how to receive communion. One day he asked us to come to the pines without eating and to bring a little girl with us. We did as he asked. The angel appeared with a gold-looking goblet. He said, "I am going to give you holy communion, but this time, the Hosts are consecrated. Recite the I Confess."

We recited the prayer and then he gave us holy communion. After communion he told us that we should give thanks to God. When we finished giving thanks, he told us to recite with him the prayer, Soul of Christ. After this he said, "I will give you communion again tomorrow." And he went away.

When we told the people what happened, some didn't believe us, especially the priests, because they said that an angel cannot consecrate.

When we saw the angel again, we told him what the priests had said and he answered that he obtained the consecrated Hosts from the tabernacles of the earth. Then when we related this to the people, some still doubted it. He gave communion over a long period.

(New Entry)

The Blessed Virgin directed Loli, Jacinta, Mari Cruz and me to recite the Rosary at the cuadro. Some days we went at six o'clock in the morning, sometimes later. Jacinta, Mari Cruz and I went at six or seven in the morning. Loli did not go at any set time. Later, Mari Cruz was not able to get up so early and she began going at eight. Jacinta continued going at six with her mother. People from the village went with us. During Holy Week, the Blessed Virgin directed me to go at five in the morning, which I did, because the Blessed Virgin always wants us to do penance.

(New Entry)

The Blessed Virgin told me of a great Miracle God Our Lord will perform through her intercession. Just as the chastisement will be very, very great in keeping with what we deserve, so too the Miracle will be extremely great, in keeping with the needs of the world.

The Blessed Virgin has told me the date of the Miracle and what it will consist of. I

am supposed to announce it to the people eight days in advance, so that they will come. The Pope will see it from wherever he is, and Padre Pio also. The sick who are present at the Miracle will be cured and sinners converted. There will be no doubt in the mind of anyone who sees this great Miracle, which God Our Lord will perform through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. And now we all await this great day of the Miracle. Let us see if the world changes and the chastisement is averted.

(New Entry)

At the very beginning of the apparitions, the Virgin told Loli, Jacinta, Mari Cruz and me that we would contradict each other. That our parents would not get along well with each other. We would come to a point where we would even deny that we had seen the Virgin and the angel. We certainly were greatly surprised to hear her say this.

In January of 1963 the things that the Virgin had told us happened. We began contradicting each other and we went so far as to deny that we saw the Blessed Virgin. We even went to confess it one day.

But, inside us, we knew that the angel and the Virgin had appeared to us, because of the peace we felt in our souls and the great desire to love them more than ever with all our hearts. Remembering their smiles and conversations we had with them made us want to love them much more and surrender ourselves to them completely.

When we went to confess this, we did so without thinking, without believing it was a sin. We went because the pastor, Father Valentín Marichalar, told us we should go. He gave us ten Rosaries and five Our Fathers for penance.

I don't know what caused this little doubt. It was the kind of doubt which comes from the Devil wanting us to disavow the Blessed Virgin.

We told our parents that we had not seen the Virgin, but the calls and the Miracle of the Sacred Hosts were true. I could not understand why I was saying these kinds of things, since my conscience was completely at rest about having seen the Blessed Virgin.

For a few days we were saying things of this nature. Then the Blessed Virgin appeared to us again. Loli's father, Ceferino, brought in a commission of doctors made up of Alejandro Gasca, Felix Gallego and Celestino Ortiz.

The very night the commission arrived, they began asking Mari Cruz, Jacinta and their parents why they denied seeing the Virgin. I don't know what they said. I do know that the doctors stated that I had fabricated the miracle of the Host. They explained it in their own way, that it was clearly in one of those moments when one does not realize what one is saying, and they also allowed themselves to be influenced a little by the Devil.

(New Entry)

Since that day the three girls have not had any more apparitions. However, I had an apparition that same night and other apparitions up to the twentieth of January. Since then I have not seen the Blessed Virgin anymore.

Loli and Jacinta have now returned to reality and believe that they saw the Blessed Virgin. To be sure, how could they not believe it?

But Mari Cruz continues to say that she did not see the Virgin.

I also experienced a bit of doubt about the Miracle occurring. One day, when I was alone in my room, I heard a voice that said, "Conchita, do not doubt that my Son will perform a miracle." I heard it interiorly, as clearly as if through my ears, even better than spoken words. It left me with peace and joy even greater than that experienced when I saw her.

Plácido Ruiloba of Santander was the first person to whom I told this. He told it to others. These things are called locutions. They can be described as a voice of joy, a voice of happiness, a voice of peace.

I no longer experienced any doubts about anything. The day passed without the voice returning. This made me feel bad. But I understood. How could God give me such sweet happiness without my having merited it?

The locution did me so much good, so very much good, for it was as if the Blessed Virgin was within me.

One month later, while in church, I again heard that voice of interior happiness which speaks without words. I prefer locutions to apparitions because the locutions I have within. Oh! what happiness when I have the Blessed Virgin within me! What a shame to be bad! But that is the way of the world.

I prefer to have Jesus within me. Jesus who will give me the cross to purify me and who through my crosses will permit me to do something for the world with the help of God, for by myself I can do nothing. Here is a prayer I say to Jesus: "Oh, my Jesus."

This is the conclusion of the diary. But when writing Chapter 9 of this book it struck me as strange that in 1968 when Conchita was writing what she described as a note for herself, about Padre Pio's veil and receiving the sweet odor, she may have been writing in a diary. So I asked and Conchita just simply said, "Yes." I asked where this diary was now and she replied, "I gave everything to my spiritual director." It would therefore be impossible to speculate about what the materials not yet known might turn out to be. For whatever reason, this is all that can be revealed at this point. Since Conchita's feelings are so strong about the message, I will close this chapter with the date that Conchita feels is the most important day in the events recorded in her diary — October 18, 1961 — as she recorded it:

Wednesday, October 18, 1961

The commission states that, since it was raining so hard and the people, many of them, had no protection, it would be better to announce the message at nine or nine-thirty. This is what the commission said and so this is what we did.

The four of us and the people who were there went up to the pines at five minutes to ten. When we arrived at the pines, Father Valentín was already there. He read the message

in a low voice and after reading it, he gave us the message so that we could read it. The four of us read it together. However, the people did not understand us well, so a man read it.

After reading the message, we went down toward the village. In the Calleja at the place we call the cuadro, the Blessed Virgin appeared to us and said to me, "At this moment, Father Ramón María Andreu is having doubts."

Because I was very surprised, she told me where he had started to doubt, what he had been thinking about and everything else.

The message which was read is as follows:

WE MUST MAKE MANY SACRIFICES,
PERFORM MUCH PENANCE, AND VISIT
THE BLESSED SACRAMENT FREQUENTLY.
BUT, FIRST, WE MUST LEAD GOOD LIVES.
IF WE DO NOT, A CHASTISEMENT WILL
BEFALL US. THE CUP IS ALREADY FILLING
UP AND IF WE DO NOT CHANGE, A VERY
GREAT CHASTISEMENT WILL COME UPON US.

Appendix

ACTUAL SOUND TRACK OF DOCUMENTARY

[Back to Top](#)

To the original question and answer portion of the second documentary a couple of positive additions have been made. Since this had been produced ten years before, and also considering that it had been done in Spanish, I decided to read it to Conchita and see if she could add any information which would enlighten us further. It also presented an opportunity to check the translation.

Conchita listened to each question with great intensity and in most cases she would agree instantly. However, sometimes she would make a comment. This approach gave me an opportunity to ask a few other questions.

It should be mentioned that during the filming of this documentary Conchita was being shown pictures from some of the ecstasies. The medical doctor for whom she worked as a nurse practitioner conducted the interview.

Of the three questions that I mentioned earlier and that I did not ask ten years ago, one remained. (The first question was with regard to the present Pope being the last Pope. The second was in regard to there being no World War III.)

Conchita, it has been reported that, because many people were talking of future space travel, you asked

the Virgin about people living in space. The Virgin said yes and added nothing else.

I can remember that. Is it in my diary?

No, Conchita, and I do not see anything about World War III.

Oh, I thought it might be there. Perhaps it is with the other things I gave to my spiritual director. But I am still sure that I was told that there would be no World War III.

Conchita, I have heard that you told a mother who was carrying her three-month-old baby that the baby was in sin. Did this happen?

Oh no, this never happened.

Let me read to you what was said. During one of the ecstasies, the Virgin told you this baby was in sin...

Oh yes, yes (interrupting), I do recall that. After the ecstasy I told the woman what the Virgin had said and she told me that the baby had not been baptized.

In your diary you sometimes refer to the vision as the Lady, the Virgin, the Most Holy Virgin and in other ways. Can you explain this?

When I was told that it would be a good idea to keep a diary, I began jotting things down. In my village, when we said the Lady, the Virgin, or any other title, we were referring to the Blessed Mother. My daughters often say Mary. This sounds strange to me, almost improper. I never say just Mary.

Your memory and your enthusiasm do not seem as sure and as strong as they were ten years ago.

I can hardly remember. That is one of the reasons why I do not like to discuss the events. I never even think of them anymore. The future holds the answer. You are right about my not being as enthusiastic. I used to have a desire to see the message spread. Now, for some reason, I no longer personally feel compelled to spread the message.

At this point I showed Conchita a few other things that were reported in various pieces of literature. Either she didn't recall them or denied that they happened, stating that they were too ridiculous to even discuss.

Here are the exact questions and answers from the documentary that was made in May 1973.

Question — I would like to talk about all these apparitions that occurred between the years of 1961 to 1965. Do you have any recollection of those years in your village of Garabandal?

Conchita — Of course, I will never forget them. I have tried. I even left the village with that intention but everywhere I am I always remember them.

Question — Here we have a picture of the Virgin Mary. Is this what the Virgin looked like when she appeared in Garabandal?

Conchita — There is some resemblance in the way she is dressed, but the face does not look like her at all.

Question — When the Virgin came to see you was she always motionless like this? Did she move her hands? Did her hair move?

Conchita — Her hands moved and at times she was motionless. Her hair moved.

Question — so she acted as an average person?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — So, not like a picture standing there? She would move her lips. Is that right?

Conchita — Yes. And you could hear her voice in your ears as you could with any other person.

Question — When it was windy did her hair move?

Conchita — Yes, just as if she was on earth. We thought she was down here with us.

Question — As an ordinary human person?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — When the Virgin came, what feeling did you experience? Was she like a friend or did you feel afraid?

Conchita — Whenever she came, we felt a great joy. It was as though she had been on a trip and had finally come back.

Question — So how did you feel toward her? Like a friend?

Conchita — I felt toward her like a friend, or just as my mother.

Question — Did she always appear this way or did she sometimes appear dressed in another way?

Conchita — She would always come with a white dress and a blue mantle. One time, I remember we said to her, "Why do you come this way?" Because we were used to seeing the statues of the Virgin of Mount Carmel with a brown dress. So the next day, or several days later, I do not remember very well, she came dressed in brown. After that she always came with a white dress and a blue mantle.

Question — I believe she also appeared sometimes with a young boy?

Conchita — Yes. She sometimes came with a small infant.

Question — Who was that infant? Was he the infant God?

Conchita — We always called him Baby Jesus, but she never told us who he was.

Question — Notice on the statue of the Virgin that she has a scapular on her right hand.

Conchita — Yes, she carries a brown scapular.

Question — Did she always wear the scapular or just sometimes?

Conchita — Always. She always wore it.

Question — Here is a picture of Mary Loli, one of the visionaries, during one of the apparitions. She is carrying a lot of rosaries and medals. Do you remember during the apparitions if the Virgin asked you to bring these objects for her to kiss?

Conchita — Yes, she used to tell us to bring her objects so that she could kiss them. She said that those people wearing these objects would spend their purgatory here on earth. She also said that these objects would perform miracles or wonders. I think she said wonders, not miracles.

Question — Do you recall any miracle or wonder done by a rosary that the Virgin kissed?

Conchita — Certainly, I remember one about a medal. This little girl was in a coma. They were waiting for her to die. They had already given her the sacraments. A lady brought her a piece of pine from the tree where the Virgin appeared and the medal. This little girl was completely cured between that night and the following morning. She is already married, has children and is completely normal.

Question — In this photo we see Mary Loli with many rosaries. Did the Virgin ever talk to you about the Rosary?

Conchita — Every time we saw the Virgin we would say the Rosary with her.

Question — How did she teach you? Did she lead you in praying it?

Conchita — Yes, she used to lead us in praying it and we would repeat her words.

Question — How did she say it? Slowly or quickly?

Conchita — Slowly, very slowly.

Question — Is that the right way to say it?

Conchita — We thought of it as the right way at the time.

Question — I believe we have here a photo of one of the ecstasies. Mary Loli is putting a ring on a married man. Do you remember about the rings? Did the Virgin ask for wedding rings to kiss?

Conchita — Yes, the people would give us the wedding rings for the Virgin to kiss. Sometimes we would have rings on every finger. Then when we saw the Virgin we would give them to her to kiss. She would tell us to put the rings on each person. She would say, "This ring is for this person." We wouldn't see the rings or the persons but we followed her directions.

Question — That's unusual because you are in ecstasy looking up. How did you know which ring you had if you had your hands full of rings?

Conchita — She would tell us, "Not this ring, but the one on your little finger," and so on. Let me tell you a case that happened once regarding these rings. A couple once gave me two rings for the

Virgin to kiss. And the moment I gave them to the Virgin, she didn't kiss them. She gave me a message for them instead, and she told me to tell them privately. The message was that they were not married but just living together. I told them and the couple cried. Later they got married.

Question — Here we have another photo. This is you as a child giving a man a crucifix to kiss. Do you remember these events, such as this with the crucifix?

Conchita — I do remember very well. I remember that we would give people crucifixes to kiss. I didn't know the people who kissed them. The Virgin would say to us, "Extend your arms," and the crucifix would be kissed by whomever the Virgin wanted.

Question — I heard that there was something that happened with a small crucifix. Do you remember what it was?

Conchita — Yes, one day a man gave me a very small crucifix, about the size of a little fingernail. When I went to give it to the Virgin to kiss, it fell to the ground and I lost it. When the man came to ask me for the crucifix, I said that I had lost it, but not to worry because I would ask the Virgin to help me find it. Several nights later I found it. The Virgin said to me, "Bend down and pick up that object." When I bent down I picked up something covered with mud and that was the crucifix I had lost.

Question — What did you do with the crucifix?

Conchita — I gave it to the man.

Question — Do you remember anything about the priests during the apparitions? Do you remember anything specific that occurred?

Conchita — I remember that during that time many priests used to come and many were in civilian dress. I don't know how, but we always knew who the priests were, even when there were a lot of people. One night in particular while seeing the Virgin, there were a lot of people. The Virgin told us to hold out our arms, so we did. When it was over we found out that everyone to whom we have given the crucifix to kiss was a priest in civilian clothes.

Question — Do you remember the story you told me about a priest who arrived in civilian clothes to see if he could trick you?

Conchita — Yes, he came with a girl and said that she was his fiancée. He said to tell the Virgin something about it.

Question — About the girl the priest said was his fiancée?

Conchita — Yes, he said to tell the Virgin something about him and his fiancée and we found out that he was a priest. I don't recall if she told us he was a priest or if we found it out by ourselves.

Question — I also remember there was something else about a priest, a cousin of yours. Do you remember the incident?

Conchita — Yes, it was about a cousin of mine. He was six years old. He was sick. The Virgin

brought me to the house where the child was. We had always been accustomed to give the crucifix to kiss, but the crucifix was put at the feet of the child. His mother asked a priest why they had put the crucifix at his feet rather than at his lips. The priest told her that it was a sign that he was going to be a priest. (Added comment): It has been reported that I said he would become a priest, but the Virgin didn't say this, a priest in the room did.

Question — Is he a priest now?

Conchita — Yes, now he is studying to be a priest.

Question — We have more pictures here. These pictures show a woman receiving communion. I think she is a Jewish woman. Do you remember the story of this woman? What was her name?

Conchita — Catherine.

Question — Do you remember the case?

Conchita — Yes, she came to our town while she was a young girl. She came because a friend took her. She came just out of curiosity. One day Jacinta was in ecstasy. A priest had told her, "When you see the Virgin, throw holy water at her because if it is the Devil it will leave." So Jacinta, knowing that it wasn't the Devil, but in order to obey the priest, threw a glass of holy water at the Virgin and it all fell on the woman. (added comment); I am not really sure that it was Jacinta who threw the water, maybe it was Mary Loli. I'm not sure.

Question — Right on top of the woman?

Conchita — Yes. From that moment on she wanted to convert to Catholicism. Even after her parents, who were rich and had a lot of money, offered her everything so that she would not be converted. But she had received a lot of faith that day and was converted.

Question — Did she receive baptism later and first communion?

Conchita — Yes, all the sacraments.

Question — Here is another picture. There is a priest, the one at the left is Cathy, is that not right?

Conchita — Yes, Catherine.

Question — The Jewish lady. The priest is Father Ramón Andreu. The man at the right of the priest, who is he?

Conchita — That man is a Protestant. His name is Máximo. He came to the village out of curiosity. One night he saw an ecstasy that impressed him greatly and he was converted to Catholicism.

Question — He is a Catholic now?

Conchita — Yes, he is a Catholic, a good practicing Catholic.

Question — Here is a picture of the four girls: Conchita, Mary Loli, we can see Jacinta's face and Mari

Cruz. You are at the church door. How come you were at the church door?

Conchita — At the beginning we used to go into the church. But then the people, because they wanted to be first, would make a big disturbance, so the bishop said that we could not go into the church anymore. Then the Virgin, because of what the bishop said , no longer led us to the church.

Question — You mean that the Virgin used to take you to the door of the church?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — Then, in a certain way, she was saying to obey the bishop?

Conchita — Yes, I think that was an example of obedience to the bishop and to each person to obey.

Question — In the same way the Virgin was also obeying what the bishop commanded?

Conchita — Yes, she never went in either.

Question — When the bishop said to stop in front of the church she would stop there?

Conchita — Yes, she never said anything. She just never went in.

Question — This photo was taken during the day, but I understand that the apparitions were every hour of the day and night. At what time did she appear? Only when there were people there?

Conchita — No, sometimes when we were alone, other times during the day and at night.

Question — At what time at night?

Conchita — At eleven, at twelve, at one o'clock, at five o'clock. There was no definite time.

Question — How did you know when she was going to appear at night?

Conchita — She would tell us before by three calls. But I cannot explain the calls, so please don't ask me. It's a thing that I have never understood. That is all I can say.

Question — The call, was it something you felt inside of you?

Conchita — I have never been able to explain it. It was like an immense joy that brings you to a place. Not knowing where you are going, just that you have to go there.

Question — Was there a time when the Virgin came after these calls at two or three o'clock in the morning?

Conchita — Yes, at three o'clock and at five o'clock. There was no definite time.

Question — Was there anyone there to see you?

Conchita — Sometimes no one. At other times my mother or many people.

Question — During all these apparitions and all these spectacular things, I also know there were messages. I remember there was one in 1961. That was the first message. Do you remember the first message that the Virgin gave? What was it about? What did the Virgin say?

Conchita — Yes, the words of the Virgin are: "We have to make many sacrifices, many penances. We have to visit the Blessed Sacrament often. Above all, we must be very good. The cup is already being filled. If we don't change, a great punishment will come upon us." I understand it like this, though not because the Virgin said it. With respect to penance and sacrifice, penance is what we impose on ourselves; sacrifice is giving up things as a situation suggests. For example, the person who scolds us, not to answer them back. Or if we receive a blow, to offer it to God. For me this is self-imposed penance and sacrifice.

Question — So the message talks about sacrifice, penance, visits to the blessed Sacrament and above all being good. With respect to sacrifice and penance, I remember an instance that happened to you about a piece of gum. Do you remember?

Conchita — Yes, one day on the last apparition on November 13, 1965, I had a piece of gum in my mouth. The moment I saw the Virgin I put it in my cheek and did not chew it anymore. But she said, "Why don't you get rid of that gum? Offer it for me." I thought she hadn't seen it, but she knew I had it. So I took the gum out of my mouth. For me this was an example that she is not asking for big sacrifices, but small ones so that we can continually offer them out of love for her.

Question — So little sacrifices are good because they are made in the presence of God?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — Because gum is not bad, right?

Conchita — Not at all, but giving it up is an act of love to God.

Question — She also talked about penance, sacrifice and that we have to be good, above all we must be good. What did the Virgin mean when she said, "Above all, to be good"?

Conchita — I don't know what the Virgin meant. I understand it to be a life lived moment by moment, offering everything to God. Living like a Christian the way our conscience tells us — that's what I think she meant.

Question — So everyone can be good?

Conchita — Sure. Everyone, in their religion, in their environment, in their families, their jobs, they themselves know how to be good. Because I believe everyone has his own conscience and God speaks to each one through his conscience.

Question — Each man and woman knows what is good or bad, no matter if he is here or in a little village like Garabandal?

Conchita — I am sure each person knows when he does something good or something bad.

Question — There are some pictures about communion. Here you are, Conchita, but we cannot see the

Host. I believe the angel gave you communion many times. Do you remember how many times he brought you communion?

Conchita — With regard to communion, the Virgin taught us the value and the importance of the Eucharist. After the apparitions started, we never missed a day of communion. When there wasn't a priest in the town, the angel would come down to give us communion. I don't know how he knew there wasn't a priest in town.

Question — Who was he — the angel?

Conchita — Yes, the angel, and he came down to give us communion.

Question — About communion, only priests can consecrate. Did you ever ask the Virgin where he obtained the Host?

Conchita — Yes, we asked because a priest sent us to ask. She said that the angel would come down and would take a Host already consecrated from a tabernacle.

Question — With respect to communion, the angel came hundreds of times, is that right?

Conchita — No, not many times. Generally there was a priest in the village. He would only give us communion when there was no priest.

Question — How many times more or less?

Conchita — Maybe forty times, I am not sure.

Question — One of those times, as we can see on the screen the "little miracle," as you called it, happened when the Host appeared on your tongue. Do you remember anything of the day of the "little miracle"?

Conchita — Yes. Do you know why I called it the "little miracle"? Because when the Virgin said, "I am going to perform a miracle — that everyone will see the sacred form on your tongue." I thought everyone could see it every time I went to communion. So I said, "That is not a miracle." She said that nobody could see it, only on this day. So I called it the "little miracle." The angel on that day came down and brought me the Host, just as on other days, but that day everyone saw it.

Question — Do you remember anyone who was there and saw it?

Conchita — Many people.

Question — Any priests who saw it or any person you could recognize?

Conchita — Many priests, especially one who was a Franciscan. I cannot remember his name. He did not believe it or did not believe that it was the Sacred Host. He thought it was an illusion or some other thing. I cannot remember what now. He wanted to take the Host to see if it was real or fake, but he was afraid. So he left; some days later he came back repentant about his thoughts and asked for pardon. There was a great change in him after that. Also, they used to take pictures and movies as you can see. There was a doctor who was not a Catholic and had led a bad life. And another man who was very good. The doctor wanted to take pictures; he had a good camera with

lights and all that stuff. However, at that moment the light bulbs blew and the cameras didn't work. The other, however, without bulbs and a very simple camera, took the pictures. After that, the doctor was converted and the other had great happiness.

Question — Now from the "little miracle," let's go up to the great Miracle. The one that personally impresses me the most. Here we have a picture, more or less to get an idea, because we don't know what it's going to be all about. But I would like you to tell me everything you can about the day of the great Miracle that is coming. That day did not come yet, did it Conchita?

Conchita — No, not yet.

Question — What's going to happen on that day?

Conchita — Well, I will tell you all that I can, as the Virgin told it to me. The Virgin told me that God was going to perform a great Miracle. There would be no doubt about this Miracle. It would be a miracle coming directly from God. There will be no human intervention. A day will come. She told me the day, the month and the year. So I know the exact date.

Question — So you know the day, the month and the year in which it will occur?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — And that time has not come yet?

Conchita — No, not yet.

Question — This happened twelve years ago and it hasn't arrived yet?

Conchita — No, not yet.

Question — When is that day?

Conchita — It is coming soon.

Question — It is coming soon?

Conchita — I cannot tell until eight days before the date.

Question — What is going to happen on that date?

Conchita — I cannot say exactly what is going to happen. But I can say the Virgin said that everyone who would go there on that day would see it. The sick who go will be cured, no matter what their disease or their religion. However, they have to be there.

Question — So there will be no exception whether the person has cancer or whether he's paralyzed or blind or deaf?

Conchita — No, there will be no exceptions.

Question — No exceptions, the sick...?

Conchita — The sick will be cured. Those without faith will believe.

Question — Those who do not believe will believe, even if the person is Protestant or Jewish or Moslem or a Communist?

Conchita — She didn't give any conditions or make any exceptions. She only said the sick who are present will be cured.

Question — Who will be able to see this Miracle, only the Catholics who are present?

Conchita — Everyone who is present.

Question — Everyone, no matter their religion?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — Whatever nationality?

Conchita — No matter.

Question — Did she ever make an exception? Were her words ever directed toward anyone?

Conchita — No, they were always directed toward the whole world.

Question — Toward the whole world?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — On the day of the Miracle, did you say that those present would be converted?

Conchita — The Virgin said that everyone present would believe. They would see that this was directly from God. All sinners would be converted. She also said that you would be able to take pictures and televise it. Also, from that moment on there would be a permanent sign in the pines; everyone present there could view it. The sign would be visible and could be touched, but not felt. I can't explain it.

Question — This is very impressive, because even after Christ's time, if you go to Jerusalem, there is no visible sign there. However, on the day of the Miracle there will be an extraordinary sign not made by human hands?

Conchita — This sign will stay until the end of time.

Question — Until the end of time?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — Everyone will be able to photograph and televise it — but you won't be able to feel it by touching?

Conchita — It will be like smoke — you can touch it but not feel it.

Question: With respect to the sick people, since this is what really interests me, I think the Virgin named one particular person by name, a blind man called Joe Lomangino. What did she say about him?

Conchita — She said that on the day of the great Miracle he will recover his sight, he will be able to see. She also talked about a paralytic boy whose parents came from my town. This boy also will be cured. These are the only two people she talked about. (Added comment): I really do not remember how this was said to me, but I wrote Joe Lomangino a letter.

Question — I know Joe Lomangino personally and I have a great liking for him. In fact, I got involved in Garabandal because I heard about him and that he lived in Lindenhurst, on Long Island. I felt that if this was to occur during my lifetime I would like to see it. How did he lose his sight?

Conchita — A wheel from a truck blew up and hit him on the head, and as a result he lost his sight.

Question — How long ago did this happen?

Conchita — When he was eighteen years old. Now he is past forty.

Question — This is a picture of Father Luis. Can you tell us something about him?

Conchita — Yes, this priest used to come frequently to the town to see if the apparitions were real or not. After a while he believed in them. One day while we were in ecstasy at the pines, he began to shout, "Miracle, miracle, miracle." The Virgin said, "At this moment, the priest is seeing me and the Miracle that will occur."

Question — Father Luis was actually seeing the Miracle?

Conchita — Yes. That same day on his trip back he said to his friends, "This is the happiest day of my life. What a great Mother we have in heaven. The apparitions are true." He died as he said these words.

Question — This picture shows the burial of Father Luis. Didn't the Virgin say that something would occur on the day after the Miracle concerning Father Luis?

Conchita — Yes, she said that on the day after the Miracle he would be incorrupt; he is that now, but on that day they will open his grave and his body will be preserved intact. Now his brothers, who have worked very hard for Garabandal, got impatient and wanted to open up his grave. They even sent many invitations for the opening. However, on the day that they were going to open his grave their superior said not to.

Question — You mean the Jesuit superior?

Conchita — Yes, he said not to open the grave. I knew this was going to happen because they weren't supposed to do this until the day of the Miracle.

Question — This is fascinating. On the day of the Miracle the sick will be cured; Joe Lomangino will recover his sight; the boy from your town will be cured of his paralysis; there will be a permanent sign that everyone will be able to see, photograph and televise, but no one will be able to feel with their

hands; Father Luis will be taken out of his grave incorrupt. Then all we have left is to know the date?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — When is the date?

Conchita — Eight days before I will tell you.

Question — Is it getting near?

Conchita — Yes, we have less time to wait than we had two years ago.

Question — There is something else that interests me. And that is the Warning that will occur before the Miracle. Sometimes when you mention the Warning you say that it was like a starburst?

Conchita — That was an example.

Question — What will occur on the day of the Warning?

Conchita — The most important thing about that day is that everyone in the whole world will see a sign, a grace, or a punishment within themselves — in other words, a Warning. They will find themselves all alone in the world, no matter where they are at that time. Alone with their consciences right before God. They will then see all their sins and what their sins have caused. (Added comment): Remember that aviso really means something different from Warning. It is more like preparation or notice.

Question — Let me see if I understand this correctly. One of these days I am going to feel the Warning. No matter where I am, I am going to feel it?

Conchita — Anywhere you are.

Question — If I am in the house or in the street or if I am in Russia or in Puerto Rico, or Santo Domingo, or Cuba, no matter where I am, I will feel this Warning?

Conchita — You will feel it.

Question — Who will feel this Warning? Catholics, Protestants, Communists, Jews?

Conchita — Everyone who lives in the world.

Question — Will we all feel it at the same time?

Conchita — Yes, at the same time.

Question — So everyone will feel it on the same day and at the same hour. How long will it last?

Conchita — I don't know how long it will last. However, everyone is going to feel it differently.

Question — Will it last a half hour? Will it last an hour?

Conchita — I really don't know. I think that five minutes would be an adequate time.

Question — How will we feel?

Conchita — We will all feel differently because it will depend on our consciences. The Warning will be very personal. Therefore, we will all react differently to it. Because we will feel something, but the most important thing will be to recognize our own sins, and the bad consequences of them, so you will have a different view of the Warning, because your sins are different from mine.

Question — This is amazing. One day I will be alone in the world with nothing around me except God and my sins?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — Will something happen to me because of my sins? I mean, will physical harm come upon me as a result of my sins?

Conchita — No, unless it is something that results from the shock, as, for example, a heart attack.

Question — Nothing like fire or pain?

Conchita — No.

Question — No physical harm then. So it will consist of facing God alone with my sins. How about the good things? Will I see them also?

Conchita — No. This will be only a Warning to see what you have done with your sins. It will be like a purification before the Miracle to see if with this Warning and the Miracle we will be converted.

Question — This will happen before the Miracle?

Conchita — Yes, before the Miracle.

Question — So this can occur any day now?

Conchita — Yes, but I don't know the date when it will occur.

Question — But it will occur before the Miracle. Here we have a picture of Pope Paul VI with Father Andreu. Who is with this priest?

Conchita — This is Jacinta.

Question — So this is Jacinta with the priest. I would like to ask you something about the investigation made by the priests and bishops. I understand several commissions investigated the apparitions of Garabandal?

Conchita — Yes, there were several commissions and we had all kinds of tests including psychiatric tests done on us. I was even taken to the city of Santander to see if I was hypnotized or insane. They took all kinds of tests.

Question — Do you remember something about those tests or about the interrogations with the priests

and bishops? Do you remember something that they said to you or did to you?

Conchita — Something that they said to me or something that they did to me?

Question — Either.

Conchita — During the apparitions they used to pinch us, put matches close to our eyes to see if we would blink. Also, they would wave paper before our eyes and hold matches against our legs to see if we would jump. But we never felt anything. When the apparition was over, we would see marks of fingernails on our bodies from the pinching. But they really never mistreated us.

Question — I remember you had very long braids. What happened to them?

Conchita — When I went to the city of Santander the commission told me that the braids caused the other children to be hypnotized. So they cut them off.

Question — I understand that there have been several bishops in Santander since the apparitions. How many have there been?

Conchita — About five.

Question — Did you ever talk to the bishops? If so, what did they say?

Conchita — They did not believe in the apparitions.

Question — Do you remember any conversations with them?

Conchita — I remember the first bishop told me to stay in Santander and never to return to my town. He said he would pay for my schooling and that way I wouldn't hear anything more about the apparitions. He felt that if I stayed in Santander nobody would see the Virgin. But I didn't stay. (Added comment): The present bishop, however, is more open-minded.

Question — Did anybody ever mistreat you?

Conchita — No, no one.

Question — Here is a picture of you, Conchita, when you were just a child, twelve years old. They are pinching you. So when they pinched you in these tests that you went through, you never felt anything until later?

Conchita — No, never.

Question — Did you ever have any doubts about the apparitions?

Conchita — Yes, in 1967, some time after the apparitions had taken place, I did have doubts.

Question — What happened then?

Conchita — All of a sudden on August 15 something happened that I will never forget. There were a lot of people around me and I was overwhelmed with the feeling that I was not honest. I felt I

was deceiving all those people and that I ought to confess it. So I went to a priest and told him I hadn't seen the Virgin and that I wanted to tell the bishops it was like an illusion or a dream or like living a lie. After confessing to the priest, I left for the town of Pamplona because I was studying there. The bishop came and asked me to tell him everything. I told him I had never seen the Virgin and that I had been deceiving everybody all the time. And that I wanted to confess to him and tell him everything so he could tell it to everybody else. These doubts and denials of the Virgin's apparitions lasted five or six days. Since then, up to this time, I have a confusion and doubt within me. I am waiting for the Miracle to confirm whether this is true or not.

Question — So you are waiting for the Miracle?

Conchita — Yes, to see if I have seen the Virgin or not. But I am sure she told me the date of the Miracle as well as what the Miracle would be.

Question — Do I understand you right that, besides the Miracle and the Warning, there will also be a punishment?

Conchita — The Virgin said that, if we didn't convert with the Warning and the Miracle, then there will be a punishment. This however is not absolute.

Question — So the punishment will occur or not occur depending on our conversion?

Conchita — Yes.

Question — Both the Warning and the Miracle are just aids to help us fulfill the message? The message is the main thing in the apparitions. Now you have told us the message she gave on October 18, 1961. However, there is a more complete message given on a later date. This message was given on June 18, 1965.

Conchita — That's right.

Question — Do you remember that message? Could you tell us about it?

Conchita — Yes, certainly. The angel said, "Because the message of October 18, 1961, hasn't been fulfilled and the world doesn't know about it, I tell you this is the last one. I said before the cup was filling up. Now it is overflowing. Many priests, bishops and cardinals are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them. Each day we give the Eucharist less and less importance. We should use all our efforts to avoid God's wrath. If you sincerely ask for pardon, He will forgive you. Your Mother, through the mediation of St. Michael, the angel, asks you to correct your ways. You are now receiving the last Warnings. Think of the passion of Jesus."

Question — This is the message that you wrote by hand when you were a girl. How old were you then?

Conchita — That was in 1965. I was about fifteen years old.

Question — Fifteen years old. In this last message the Virgin insists once more on the importance of the Eucharist. The apparitions of Garabandal focus great attention on the Eucharist?

Conchita — Yes, she used to insist that we should visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently.

Question — She said that each day we give less and less importance to the Eucharist?

Conchita — Yes, you are right.

Question — This was said in 1965?

Conchita — Yes, in 1965.

Question — She also talks about the priests and the bishops going on the road to destruction.

Conchita — I think that each day she would mention the priests and that we should pray for them. We never understood why. For us, priests were like saints, because we never had many priests coming to our village. It was considered a great privilege whenever one came.

Question — She also talked to you about the bishops?

Conchita — Yes, she talked about priests, bishops and cardinals.

Question — What did you think about the bishops and cardinals being on the road to perdition since you were girls from such a small village?

Conchita — We thought it was very strange, but we would repeat it as she said it.

Question — The message was then the important thing. It was the reason why the Virgin came to Garabandal?

Conchita — Yes, it was the reason why she came to Garabandal.

Question — After all these apparitions, you must be trying to live the message wherever you are. What have you done or what have you tried to do to try to live the message?

Conchita — What would give the Virgin great happiness is a very difficult thing for me. That is to live each moment of the day doing everything for God.

Question — To live each day thinking of God and offering everything that He sends us. Conchita, do you think that you and I are living the message?

Conchita — I think I am, but you have to answer for yourself.

Question — You are working as a nurse. Do you fulfill the message there?

Conchita — I try to.

Question — How do you try?

Conchita — Doing my work to the best of my abilities. I treat the patients the way I should.

Question — How about a housewife with three or four children who is busy all day? Do you think she can fulfill the message?

Conchita — Surely, accordingly to the perfection in which she can accomplish her duties, offering

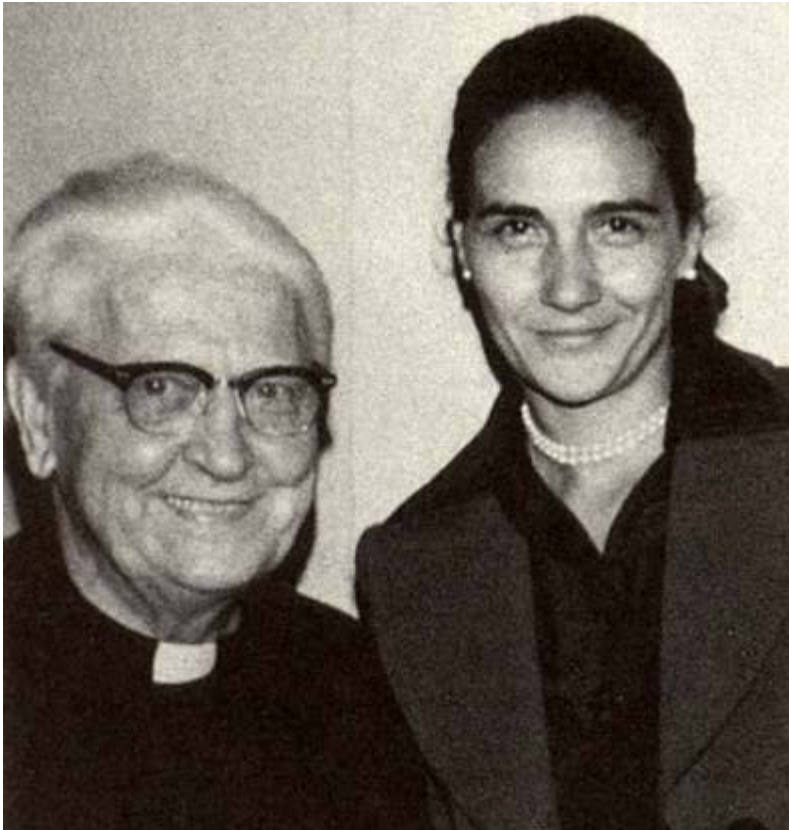
God all her actions.

Question — Offering God all the little things she does during the day? So it is not what you do, but how you do it?

Conchita — How you do it, that is true.

Question — A person working in an office can also fulfill the message?

Conchita — You can fulfill the message anywhere. You can always be good and praise God.



Conchita with the late Fr. Walter Ciszek who believed in Garabandal and always carried on his person one of the small "relic" medals containing a piece of missal kissed by the Virgin at Garabandal.



Conchita with Mother Teresa

