

Transcript of “*Betania*” for 2017–MarianNews YouTubeChannel
“Sister Anne” (Mary K.) Farran -- <https://houseofmaryomd.org>
An improved “chapter” version is in preparation for a book publication.

Good morning everyone!
Greetings to our audio and YouTube listeners!

This morning we’re going to speak of two countries in South America where Mary appeared often in recent times with messages for the world and for the local people. The apparition site of Betania, Venezuela just marked its fortieth anniversary. Three or four decades ago, beautiful Venezuela was attracting many visitors because of the spectacular reports from Betania. But now Venezuela is in a nightmare situation. Nobody wants to go there and its citizens want to escape. They cross into Columbia legally or illegally to purchase food with the remains of their savings, or they cross into Brazil for basic medical care and for treatment of wounds from the violence in the streets. Caracas has been named the most dangerous city in the world and Venezuela is listed as the world’s ninth most corrupt country. A year ago the inflation shot up to 700% but this month it’s estimated at 1600%. Imagine everything you want to purchase is sixteen times the price you’re accustomed to pay, but your paycheck hasn’t gone up. In fact, many jobs and businesses have dissolved.

I’d heard about Betania off and on over the years. Although it was approved, I just couldn’t feel excited about it. Spanish translations of the messages would be released from time to time, but I didn’t perceive the substance. They seemed to dangle like shoelaces without shoes. And I was confused by an apparent separation between the apparitions and the messages. Thousands of people saw Mary, but later on, one woman, a grandmother, began hearing locutions. Then I heard that the messages weren’t approved, but only the apparitions. Well, I thought, never mind the messages, but it’s lovely that Mary’s showing herself to the people. Fifty years ago Venezuela was 96% Catholic, but like much of South America, not many have been properly catechized, so zealous Protestants have converted millions to their doctrines, capturing 30% of the nation. I praised God that Mary was appearing there and many were returning to Mass and the sacraments, but since people reported seeing Mary in different poses--Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Our Lady of Sorrows, and with her arms open as in the Miraculous Medal--how could I follow all that? It didn’t seem like an event of world importance, but something to bolster local Faith.

Eventually, some full-length books came out in English and good websites and blogs which filled out the context of the apparitions. They really can’t be separated at all from the grandmother, Maria Esperanza, who is now a Servant of God, because her cause for canonization was formally opened in 2009. “Mary Hope” to translate her name in English, had overflowed with a variety of charisms from her childhood. She had been vetted in Rome from her youth, and so highly regarded that Pope Pius XII personally gave her permission (very rare in those days) to be married at the Vatican on Dec. 8, 1956. She’s been compared to a feminine Padre Pio. Throughout her long life she often read souls, was seen to levitate, received Hosts that would appear on her tongue, exuded the fragrance of roses, suffered the stigmata each year on Good Friday. She had the gift of healing and bilocation. Visions and ecstasies began in childhood. She endured many bouts of illness, for example she was very ill for the three months when Pope John Paul almost died of blood poisoning from a transfusion during his surgery when he was shot. She ended up in Israel every time she was pregnant. It was always at a moment of crisis for Israel and Maria was called to suffer for the country within the territory. Dr. Luis Gutierrez Burgos and other professionals examined her many times (“medical mysteries”). She baffled all attempts at scientific explanation.

A prayer group formed spontaneously around her because people wanted to be near her. Maria Esperanza wanted to become a nun but St. John Bosco and St. Therese appeared to her on separate occasions, insisting that God wanted her to marry and bear children. Her courtship would require a book in itself. She was a native in Venezuela and only spoke Spanish. But in her travels to Rome heaven indicated that her spouse would be an Italian who knew little Spanish. The couple made their home in the cultured metropolis of Caracas, the capital of Venezuela with a population of five million. Maria Esperanza bore six daughters and one son. All would feel called to matrimony. But long ago, when still in her teens, Maria was told by the Blessed Virgin and Our Lord that one day she would obtain a piece of property where the Virgin herself would appear and the place would become a center of a great mission.

In 1974, she and her husband were offered some property. It matched what she had seen in vision, a small sugar plantation or farm [*finca*, in Spanish] in a rain-forest. It had been well kept by two Protestant brothers and had been a place of prayer with baptisms in the stream. They had named it Finca Betania for Bethany, the place where Jesus relaxed with his friends.

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Maria is about 46 when her family moves there.

On March 25th, 1976, Maria experienced her first apparition of the Blessed Mother in Betania. Records of her messages are irregular. She had visions from childhood, sometimes more than one a day. She wasn't always immediately cognizant about which ones were for humanity and which ones were for her personal guidance. And as a busy mother with many people coming to her for spiritual assistance, she didn't have leisure for journaling. We must also keep in mind the latino culture which is almost the antithesis of precision. Whatever is published in quotations is probably the gist, and not necessarily the exact words.

I will be your refuge my daughter. I have given you my heart. I give it to you, and will always give it.

I am the "Reconciler of All Peoples" my child. I am giving you a piece of heaven.

Lourdes-Betania in Venezuela is a place for everyone, not only Catholics, it is for all, because there should be no class distinction of nations and religions. This is your mother who gives herself as in Lourdes, Fatima, El Pilar in Saragoza, Grenare (?) and in so many places where I still offer myself.

It took me awhile to sift through the messages, the massive amount of extraordinary phenomena in her life, and the situation in Venezuela before I could ascertain the reason why the Virgin of Betania is invoked as "Reconciler of All Peoples". The proven oil reserves in Venezuela are recognized as the largest in the world, totaling some 300 billion barrels. The current economic collapse is a man-made disaster. It's a gangster state in which political leaders specialize in selling drugs and pocketing money. Two ex- government officials estimate that as much as \$300 billion has been misappropriated just in the past decade.

In most of Venezuela right now, it's every man for himself, but it's actually been that way for quite a long time. It's all about getting rich and enjoying the good life. Dictator Hugo Chavez delighted in wearing Fidel Castro's Communist mantle and praising Karl Marx. Chavez silenced critics, grabbed unprecedented power, ran roughshod over human rights and maintained close ties to drug-trafficking guerrilla terrorist groups. He denounced Catholic leaders, accused priests of siding with the country's wealthy rather than the poor and suggested that Christ would whip some church leaders for telling lies because a Venezuelan Cardinal warned the people that Chavez was a threat to democracy and freedom. Chavez-style socialism reigned until his death in 2013.

Chavez named his successor, but violent protests against the administration of President Nicolas Maduro are making headlines nearly every day. Families lack basic necessities. Teachers report children fainting in class for lack of food. Some Venezuelan families are trying to give their children away in a desperate effort to keep them alive. Limits on cash withdrawal requires stopping at six ATM machines to gather enough money to purchase minimum supplies, if they can find them. Upper class, middle class and poor people stand in long lines at supermarkets without any certainty of what might be on the shelves that day. Once wealthy people sift through dumpsters. Zoo animals have been stolen, slaughtered and eaten. The animals were already undernourished. The nation rations electricity. It can no longer afford to print its own money.

In this culture today it's normal to look out for oneself, for those in power to care nothing for those they govern, for people to make their living raising crops for drugs or selling drugs to other countries. The crime rate is astronomical and the city is a cruel and dangerous place to live. Did this happen all of a sudden? No, many conditions led to a gradual cooling of love of neighbor over many decades. Jesus and the Blessed Virgin wanted to set up Betania as a poster-city, as it were, where people would experience the joy and tranquility and natural beauty in the context of a loving community where people truly cared about one another.

During that first apparition, when eighty persons were present, and for the next ten years, only Maria Esperanza would see the Blessed Virgin but the people experienced inexplicable and beautiful phenomena: a mist coming from the jungle, sweet scents, lights, music, blue butterflies, and profusions of flowers, as well as colors in the sky and sun. When people took pictures surprising images would appear. People were attracted by the peace and the beauty. However, all this remained in

the intimacy of friends and family on private property.

Then the Virgin Mary went public. On March 25, 1984 about 150 persons had gathered to celebrate a noon Holy Mass on this solemn feast of the Annunciation. Afterward the crowd dispersed to relax. A small group of children were playing near the waterfall at the foot of the hill and suddenly, they noticed the Blessed Virgin appearing above and beyond the waterfall. It was a fleeting vision. They ran to tell the adults, most of whom thought it was child’s play, but as they were walking over, following the children, the Virgin appeared again, in full view of all present. During that same afternoon, she appeared seven times within three hours, each time around five to ten minutes in length. Her last apparition at dusk lasted approximately half an hour.

They beheld her at the edge of the jungle, a feminine figure in white with hands outstretched as if to say “come to me.” Her dress was brilliant, as if covered with diamonds. Her clothes and their own clothes moved with the same breeze. People said that they felt moved to a deep, penetrating, interior silence and peace. Many wept in joy, some knelt. Some said they felt understood, not judged. For others the sight inspired some guilt and shame. “One feels unworthy of that love. One wants to cry and ask forgiveness.”

News of the group apparition spread rapidly. Thousands of people came to Betania and many of them experienced one thing or another between 1984 and Maria Esperanza’s last apparition with a public message on January 5, 1990. 15,000 people declared that they had seen the Blessed Virgin. Who can count the number of those who witnessed other phenomena?

There is video footage of crowds of adults, teenagers, children, babies gazing into the sky, smiling, weeping, overcome with the sense of being loved and cared for by the Blessed Mother. Thousands returned to the sacraments. People wanted Mass. Priests came to the shrine. Testimonies were abundant. The Bishop did not delay to conduct an extensive investigation. He dedicated more than 500 hours, including a special trip he made to Rome in order to receive guidance from the Holy See. He interviewed more than 200 witnesses and studied more than 381 written declarations, some of them were shared declarations. At the end 490 people signed these statements, then he declared his approval: “The apparitions of March 25th, 1984, here have engendered a search for God and for interior life, openness and obedience to the Church, solidarity and fraternal sharing . . . authentic, supernatural . . .”

Mary invited the sick to approach the water at Betania. Maria Esperanza explained that “the waters would be like the water of Lourdes, so the sick would be healed of their pain so they could live a more peaceful and serene life.” There have been many healings. Like Lourdes, some receive the grace to carry the cross of their suffering with more patience and even joy.

Although the messages for the public had stopped in 1990, on Dec, 8, 1991, a sensational miracle occurred during Mass. When the priest broke the consecrated host into four parts, he consumed one, then looked at the paten and saw blood began to spurt out from one of the remaining pieces. He carried it through the vast throng so that all could see it up close and take videos of it.

As far as I can understand only the first public apparitions was approved officially, none of the messages, but everything was monitored favorably and now the cause of beatification is underway. Here are some samples of her messages which had the theme to reconcile people, to call them to live in harmony and respect:

Eleventh Apparition: December 8, 1986 - 11:00 a.m.

“Daughter, children, here I am as I announced before; some will feel me. . . others will see me between the shrubs. . . others will perceive the perfumed roses of my garden from heaven. . . and even more, some, who are sick, drinking from the water of my grotto of prayer, will be relieved; others, will be healed, attaining health and peace. . . ! I tell you, all of you will be saved . . . when the children of the Church draw close to the flock of my Divine Son. . . to nourish themselves with his mystical Body . . . Here in my Promised Land I come to call mankind to reconcile with their brothers . . . ! I

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come to bestow peace upon the world and calmness to the people and nations. . . ! I come to reign in the heart of the most humble. . . and I come to soften the proudest and the most arrogant. . . so they may amend their actions. . . !"

Fifteenth Apparition: February 16, 1989 - 4:00 p.m.

"Daughter, children, here I am. . . ! Living among you. . . ! Children, my heart beats with heavenly delights as I gaze at each one of your faces which come to find the hope of better days, to solidify your steps on the road that leads to Mount Zion. For my fountain of the waters of Betania shall restore your souls to a new life. . . and bring you to lead an apostle's life, that is to say, of service, devoted to a mission of love, which will reaffirm your trust in the light of the New Dawn of my Divine Jesus! He, my Beloved Son, wishes for all of you to live cradled in this motherly Heart, with the charisms and graces of the Holy Spirit. In this way, my children may hold hands, based on the commandment, 'Love one another. . . !' It is the only truth that can save mankind from a war among brothers. . . in these times, all should have recourse to the charitable harvest of good deeds, which is the identification of love and of truth of God's people, who are longing for Social Justice. . . because as long as unity does not come forth, you will lead a life of anguish, grief, shadows and sorrow. Behold, children, the love of a mother, who cherishes you . . . and comes to lead you toward a law of justice, love, peace and reconciliation. . . !"

Although the messages are cast in a very positive and tender tone, there is a certain threat that if they fail to convert, to put aside selfishness, the obsession for material prosperity, and fail to love God and neighbor, the end result will be a collapse of society into turmoil. God typically waits forty years for a generation to consider a gift and it seems that the anarchy and hunger in Venezuela is a sign of a nation that spurned a grace. Maria Esperanza received a number of prophecies regarding earthquakes and wars, but she was more interested in praying and getting people to reconcile so as to avert them. True to her name Esperanza focused on Hope:

Twenty eighth Apparition: October 22, 1989 - 2:30 to 3:00 a.m.

"My daughter, my Heart I gave to you. . . my Heart I give to you. . . and my Heart I will give to you forever. . . ! Daughter, children, I called you to come to meet with me, so you could feel me and see my Image reflected at my grotto of prayer . . . to give you my message in the silence of this retired corner at the "*Mater Refuge*". . . and you could attend to my petition. . . ! Daughter, children, I am speaking to all of you. . . listen to me: In all the sites and places of the world there are many families that as days go by, they have transformed themselves into large families. . . And behold, I come so all those families do not become separated or divided. . . I wish the bigger the family, the more they will love one another. . . in order to augment their own spiritual strength, and come to lead an evangelical life. . . And so, from now on, a call may be made for a program of human solidarity, of healthy families. . . with renewed spirituality. . . coming together and creating a nucleus of true children of God. . . and growing, turn into great communities, that will call on brothers of the whole world. . . ! Start right now my little ones . . . ! I keep you here in my Heart. . . !"

Finca Betania, a family farm, a sugar plantation of sweetness and flowers, was supposed to be a model for communities. Maria Esperanza saw a renewed world where people would not be lost in large cities, but connected to one another in fervent and loving communities. Although she foresaw wars and calamities, she was confident that mankind had a great future ahead. In a very unusual prophecy, she spoke of coming technology. Again, this is all a paraphrase

In March 1981, in language strikingly uncharacteristic for this 75 year old woman she made statements like:

The Holy Spirit will unleash inventions in technology that will neutralize radioactivity. Its reactions will grind to a halt, and then the time will come in which it will be used for peaceful purposes, for man's well-being and for the happiness of better days. This will come about with the sun and with the drive of magnetic forces of earthly energies: volcanic forces, wind, water, certain kinds of seaweed because phosphorus will be better assimilated. In short, no element will be wasted, everything will be used.

After that cleansing -- if mankind reverts back to the Lord, and lives in a simpler, more harmonious way, as Jesus did, in concert with nature -- devices will become far more revolutionary than even computers. A new type of music will be devised that brings health instead of the disintegrative effects of current music. There will be amazing devices with far

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more capacity to diagnose and heal human sickness -- if science and religion join forces in God's plan.

A new technology will allow a powerful new means of illumination, turning darkness into daylight. A "stellar curvature" would be tapped. Forces of light and music would be combined together in ways that are now unimaginable. She foresaw "the registration of equations to their final expression" and computer devices that will replace many of the functions of a doctor. She describes such inventions as coming from "secret forces" hidden in rhythms of nature and what she calls the "sacred canticles."

Christ told her: "Be courageous! Jesus, your instructor reveals a better tomorrow!"

This is from a woman who is a Servant of God. Hundreds of people who knew her intimately have come forward to testify to her life of consistent holiness and virtue. She never foretold a prophecy that turned out differently than predicted. On the one hand she offers testimony that people in the future will be closer to nature, closer to one another, but this is very different than the pseudo-prophecies that announce that mankind must go "back to nature" meaning, no electricity or computers or technology as if progress in these matters doesn't give glory to God. And when she announces that Betania is a "refuge" she is not advocating a physical space where seven billion can run and hide from a calamity. No, She speaks of her heart as the blessed mountain of Mt. Zion, a place of prayer to gather spiritual strength to proclaim the Word of the Lord and love of neighbor.

I have to call this out because Jesus warned us that in the latter days there would be many false prophets. They never serve up a complete lie because that would be shunned as obvious deception. John Leary has sold many books promising that angels will come and carry people to refuges to be fed and sheltered during a crisis. But John Leary has uttered many prophecies that turned out wrong. I'll deal with that in another conference. False prophets will be punished, but so will those who listen to them. And what about listening to prophets who infer that technology is evil. A paring knife can be used to murder someone. Creation itself is neutral. It's how we use it. If one prophet tells us that God wants us to develop technology to diagnose and heal human sickness, and for breaking down harmful nuclear radiation, then we need to discern well or risk becoming sinful rebels by listening to prophets that declare technology is evil.

The message of Betania is that we are to make the world a paradise of beauty and a Bethany where Jesus can rest among friends. The message of Betania is that the family must be upheld, fostered, protected. Maria Esperanza died in the United States. She spent much time in this country. Her cause for beatification must begin in the place of the death of the servant of God, so she's intimately bound to this country. It's not always easy to separate what a seer says from his or her own perspective, and what is coming from inspiration, but she felt that the United States has to save the world from socialism. Socialism makes people dependent on the state. They no longer feel responsible for their actions, their decisions, their families. Socialism kills love. Socialist leaders are feeding off the people and the people are feeding off the government. Eventually the money runs out and then there is violence and anger. She predicted that the economic situation of Venezuela would deteriorate and force people to cooperate and try to live together. It would be a painful transition but the end result would be a freedom from an evil form of government and something beautiful, a new society. This is the New Jerusalem that mankind must construct with the help of grace that comes down from heaven. And this includes the Church. She was very concerned about disunity in the Church as well as in society.

I would like to conclude this overview of this important apparition site with one of Maria Esperanza's charisms which was so unique and surprising, that there is no name or classification for it in mystical theology. Attested by doctors and numerous witnesses, including a television reporter, more than fifteen times in her life, a rose would emerge from her heart. First a great pain, as if being pierced in the heart, then a red dot between her breasts, then a bud rises up which proceeds to unfold with thorns which cause Maria an agony so great that she compares it to childbirth. Then a rose in full bloom, real, touched by the dew, emitting a perfume that is not of this world. What does it signify?

"Our Blessed Mother is calling us, exhorting us to pray the Rosary. The Rosary is that which can placate the thirst for revenge in man in those who want, who try to destroy their brothers in their desire to have material riches. They believe

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they can obtain everything through their weapons and armaments but it is only the rosary that is going to achieve this. The ones who have this will have success. Our heavenly Mother wants us to believe in God. She begs us to pray the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary daily. It is this which is going to detain Satan."