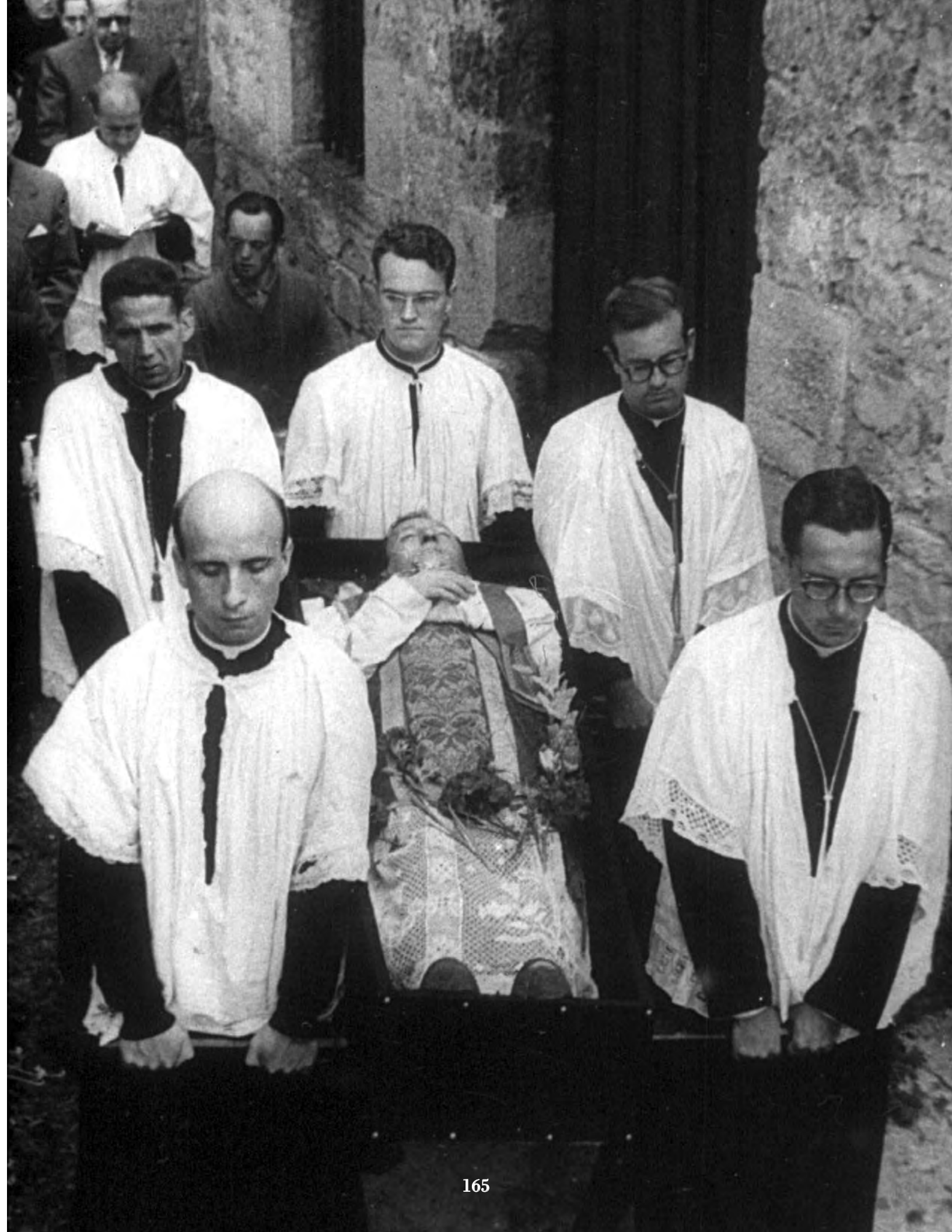




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The First Death at Garabandal



If I were to use the strong language of Christian tradition, I would say the first *martyr*. If I were to adapt my language to the 20th century political movements, I would speak of the first *victim*. Taking a medium position between these expressions, I am going to write without pretension about the first *death* at Garabandal.

He was a martyr because he was an exceptional *witness* for the cause, even to giving up his life.

He was a victim because he *sacrificed* his life as a consequence of his total devotion in the service of a cause.

Who was he?

Skeptic at the Start

We have already mentioned these lines from Conchita: **In those days while I was at Santander, there were in the village two Jesuit priests . . .**

Now let us go back a little in our story, returning to the 29th of July, the date on which the presence of these priests began to be noticed in Garabandal. The two Andreu brothers, Ramón María and Luis María, had come like so many other people, led on more by curiosity than the expectation of finding anything really important. They went simply to see what was going on because people were talking so much about what was happening there.

They came like many others, without believing.

Then one day Loli and Jacinta had an apparition at the Pines.

And the priests were there, and seeing them in ecstasy, believed.

But they believed not only because of that.

Conchita mentions only a small part of what occurred on July 29th. Now we can complete her description with some detailed accounts of the first visit of the Andreu brothers to Garabandal.

Upon arriving, they were extremely amazed on

hearing Chief of Police Juan A. Seco tell the actual story of what had happened on the preceding two days: how the children (in their ecstasy at the Pines on July 27th at nine o'clock on Thursday evening) had learned from the lips of the Virgin all that was happening to their companion Conchita at the same time in Santander, first on Alta Street and then later in the rectory of Our Lady of Consolation parish. And how Mr. Seco had immediately checked the accuracy of what the children had said by making an official telephone call to the police chief in Santander. After hearing this, the two brothers were astounded with a feeling they could not describe.

—*What is this? What's going on?* exclaimed Father Ramón.

—*Regardless of what it is, it is going to be something really worthwhile,* answered Father Luis.

They asked if something else was going to happen that night. *Definitely,* someone answered. *There should be an ecstasy at seven o'clock because yesterday the Virgin told the girls while leaving that she would return today.*

Then one of the Fontanedas, who had come with the Andreu brothers from Aguilar de Campoo, could not hide the inner shaking that the waiting was causing him and said to Father Ramón María, *This is terrible, Father! Watching the clock while waiting for a supernatural event like this in cold blood!*

About three or four hundred visitors were in the village on that last Saturday in July. As the hour drew near, Father Ramón meandered around the town with the others who were showing the excitement of expecting something, without knowing what it was or where it was coming from. Some started going toward the *calleja*.

Slightly later a young child appeared who told the group that were waiting, *There has already been one call.*

The news spread immediately and Father Ramón asked with astonishment, *What's that?*

Someone explained, *First the children receive three calls and then, after that, she comes.*

That added another surprise to the many the priest had already received. Certainly this was an



The Calleja—symbol of the Virgin's call to penance

intriguing mystery to be carefully examined.⁽¹⁾

Soon Loli and Jacinta appeared, running toward the *cuadro*. The commotion this caused was tremendous. Everyone raced toward the place in a disorganized avalanche. Father Ramón María—in order not to run over anyone, and also not to be run over himself—kept himself to the side as much as he could to let everyone else pass by. All he could do at the time was resign himself to staying on the fringe of the spectators without being able to follow closely

1. Several days after what we are relating here, the famous bullfighter Alvaro Domencq, who was fighting in a nearby village, came to Garabandal with his father and retinue. He was amazed at what they told him about the events. He followed the visionaries around saying in typical Castellian manner, *Did you see the Virgin, Sweetheart? Did you see the Virgin, my Angel?*

These men from the bull ring were amazed and amused by the calls that the girls were receiving in their ecstasies. On arriving and having heard someone saying, *Be ready, they have already received two "calls,"* the father of Mr. Domencq joked with his son, *Be careful, Alvarito, not to have one tomorrow!* (In bullfighter's jargon, a call is a warning that the head of the bullring gives to bullfighters who are not performing well.)

the phenomena that were so intriguing him. In order to be able to follow what was going on, he started to climb up on top of one of the low walls of loose stones that line the *calleja* in places. Unfortunately the stones began to scatter and fall, making a lot of noise. The people turned to stare, complaining that with such a racket they could not hear a thing that the children were saying in the ecstasies. Then the poor priest tried to hide himself as much as he could to escape from glances that were not overly benevolent.

He was in this situation when he felt someone behind him grab his arms. He turned and saw a giant—or at least at the time that is what he appeared to be—who lifted him up and began to force a way through the crowded circle of enthralled people around the children, while saying forcefully to one after the other, *Make way for the authority of the Church.*

Thanks to this providential help, Father Ramón found himself unexpectedly in the best spot for observation, right up against the visionaries, and

next to his brother whom he discovered there conscientiously making entries in his notebook, calmly caught up in what was going on.

The first thing that attracted his attention was a man at his side who was bending over, very interested in taking the pulse of the girls. Every now and then he would raise his head toward the people and say, *Normal . . . Normal . . .*

The captain of the guard began hearing *Normal . . .* and asked him, *Hey, are you a doctor?*

—*No sir, I'm a journalist.*

—*Well then, please get out of here at once.*

—*Gladly. Pardon me.*

These rather ridiculous details, and those that preceded them, caused Father Ramón to think to himself, *This thing has neither head nor tail.*

Soon both the children came to themselves at the same time, perfectly simultaneously, and looked innocently around them. Everyone was at a loss for words. Then Father Valentín, who already had experience in these matters—over a month of association with them—came near and asked them with his typical stammering. *What? What? What did the Virgin say?*

—*The Virgin said that we should go to the Pines—we, our families, the guards, the priests and the nuns—and that the others should remain below.*

Father Valentín turned toward Father Andreu and said nervously, *But what nuns? What nuns? There are no nuns here! What nuns? This isn't the Virgin!*

Father Andreu remained quiet. What did he know? This was the first time he was here and he was rather confused.

They all went up to the Pines and there the children unaffectedly pointed out the places where the various groups should situate themselves.⁽²⁾

2. «Midway toward the Pines, Loli turned around and pointed with her finger, *No one should pass beyond here, indicating a path that crossed over from the side.*

It wasn't easy to make all that crowd of 500 persons obey immediately. It could be imagined that some hadn't heard what the visionary had said. Three or four of the Civil Guards took charge of implementing these orders. I passed at the side of one of the guards as he was trying to block the passage of some people who wanted to go

It appeared that the Virgin had told the children that the people could see, but should not hear⁽³⁾. Only two little children of six years of age, Mari Carmen and Sari (sisters of Jacinta and Loli), could be near the visionaries as witnesses.



Loli with sister Sari

The ecstasy and the apparition began. The nearest spectators were able to notice that the faces of

ahead of him. One of the people said, *And who are you to stop me from seeing a miracle? The guard answered, God commands and He should be obeyed.*» (From a conference of Father Andreu at Palma de Mallorca.)

It is not easy to allocate each scene and episode precisely to the corresponding ecstasy that took place at the Pines on the afternoon of July 29th.

3. From information that I was able to gather with difficulty, it appears that only the two small witnesses whom we have first mentioned were able to circulate around Jacinta and Loli in ecstasy. Those of the privileged group—their parents, the guards, etc.—had to stay a little farther away, in such a position that they could see, but could not hear; while the crowd—down below to one side, without even seeing anything—remained waiting. At a second stage, those from the privileged group were able to draw closer and encircle the girls. Finally the whole crowd went up to the Pines.

the visionaries took on an expression of profound sorrow. One of the girls' mothers could not contain herself. *They are crying.*

Since he could not manage to hear the conversation, the parish priest called to Mari Carmen, the child witness, in order to question her. The little girl approached unhurriedly, and when she heard the questions of the priest, answered in a bored and indifferent manner: *They are telling the Virgin that she shouldn't say bad things.*⁽⁴⁾



Jacinta on right; her sister Mari Carmen at left

Everyone knew that this apparition was different from the others, that the Virgin was explaining and showing very grave things, surely in relation to some great chastisement that would come upon the world if men did not return to the ways of God by doing penance.

From statements made later on by the children, it was learned that on this day the Virgin had confided a secret and had completed the message which would be made public on the night of October 18th.⁽⁵⁾

4. Distressing things that were terrifying and painful.

5. Concerning this July 29th, so outstanding in the events of Garabandal, Police Chief Juan Alvarez Seco testifies:

«I remember that María Dolores said to me, Chief, you and my father can come up a little closer, about 100 meters to the right of the Pines. The Pastor and the nuns may come to about 100 meters too, but on the left side; the rest of the people below and far away.

We all did this. And I was able to observe that during the ecstasy the visionaries cried a lot, frightening the little girls . . . Later I learned that the reason for the visionaries

A witness present at the time noted:

«They raised up their hands as if holding up something. One pulled in her arms. Kisses were heard . . . They extended their arms . . . They smiled . . . They listened to something . . . And they cried . . .

When they returned to normal we surrounded them and saw that one of them still had tears. Why are you crying? We received no answer.»

While some of the people were speaking with the girls, the third ecstasy of the day occurred there in the same location of the Pines. This time the children could be heard with notable clearness.

—The Apparition had come with the Child, since they asked how old He was. They requested her to give them His crown, and they said that it was little.

—The Virgin told the girls that she was pleased with the way the people had acted, since they had docilely obeyed the things she had said about their positions during the ecstasy.

—She advised them to say the rosary one more time, and to do it at the Pines.

As soon as they returned to normal, Jacinta and Loli began right there to say the rosary. On reaching the fifth Ave María of the third mystery, the two children stopped at *The Lord is with . . .* without pronouncing the next word.

This ecstasy lasted about an hour. Here are some of the things that were heard:

«Why do you come? If the people hadn't obeyed, would you have come? . . . So that they believe . . . (They offer something. They give a kiss.) How beautiful you are! You're very kind . . . Tomorrow we will come while fasting, without eating anything, not anything . . . I am

being alone and isolated like this was so that the people wouldn't be too stricken on seeing up close what they were suffering, since the Virgin had to be speaking of the message, showing them something of the chastisement and how the cup was being filled with sins. This was what they had to make public later on October 18th.

On this day, the people from the village made a little altar with fruit cases, and they placed it at the foot of the Pines; it was well made and they decorated it with flowers from the fields.»

kissing your scapular . . . Today some Carmelite fathers came . . . I remember a Dominican . . . Show us your dress once more . . . It's white with white flowers . . . A guard brought a little girl who couldn't speak or walk . . . I promised him . . . Cure her! Cure someone, so that all the people can see it.»

The person who took these notes was one of the two Jesuits who had come up to the village **without believing anything**. Let us listen to what he said as recorded in the French edition of *Conchita's Diary*.

«We discussed this subject with Father Ramón María Andreu. The following is part of the dialogue.

QUESTION: *In speaking of Loli and Jacinta's ecstasy in her 'Diary,' Conchita maintains that you considered Mari Loli's gesture as a sign. Is that true?*

FATHER: Yes, that is certain, but the story is a little more involved than that simple allusion by Conchita in her diary would make one think.

QUESTION: *Could you give us a more definite idea of your attitude and feelings on the day you first went up to Garabandal?*

FATHER: As you might imagine, during that first visit to the village I didn't have the least belief in the world that events could take place there that were worthy of close attention. The first time they asked me to go, I answered, *I don't have any time to waste*. I'm usually very busy. Although I finally agreed to travel to Garabandal, it was only because of my friends' insistence and the great need I had for a rest after having preached several retreats on the Spiritual Exercises one after another.

QUESTION: *Did your brother Father Luis believe in it?*

FATHER: No, no more than I. At that time we didn't have any authentic proof. And like everyone else, we needed some minimum evidence to make an evaluation on events of this type.

QUESTION: *Concerning the episode mentioned by Conchita, exactly how did it happen? Can you tell us?*

FATHER: Gladly. It was, as I said, the first time that I had made the ascent to Garabandal. That day we had the opportunity of witnessing several of the children's actions and movements. At the end of the afternoon we were at the Pines. Loli and Jacinta were in ecstasy. There were only a few witnesses around the children. I myself was very close to them; I could hear them speaking to the Vision in the soft low-pitched voice that was typical of their ecstatic state. Now and then I could understand some of their words.

After eight or ten minutes, I thought that this had to be a case of hypnotism. I have to admit that this was no brilliant idea and lacked originality, but it was what I was actually thinking. I looked around to find the originator of this case of hypnosis. I saw Father Valentín, Ceferino, Julia, and the other spectators. They all had such an expression of admiration and astonishment that I considered them more disciples than masters. Obviously the hypnotist wasn't there!

I had already seen both the children go into the ecstatic state and come out of it at the same time. This gave me the impression that they had only one mind. What I thought then doesn't seem to make much sense, but I was thinking nevertheless, *that one of the two children would return to consciousness while the other remained in ecstasy.*⁽⁶⁾

At that exact second, Loli, who was next to me, came to, turned slightly and looked at me with a smile. I then asked her,

—*Don't you see the Virgin anymore?*

—*No Father*, She answered.

—*Why is that?* I asked.

—*Because she is gone.*

Jacinta was still in ecstasy. I said to Loli: *Look at Jacinta*. The child looked at her and smiled on seeing her in ecstasy—for it was the first time that she had seen one of her companions in this situation, being herself out of the apparition. I asked her another question, *What did the Virgin tell you?*

6. Father thought that if all had been caused by the external actions of a distant hypnotizer, those actions should have affected the two girls in the same way at the same time.



“What did the Virgin tell you?”

She was about to answer, when she fell into ecstasy again, throwing her head backwards. Then I heard this conversation between the two children and the Virgin:

Jacinta: *Loli, why did you leave?*

Loli: (talking to the apparition) *Why did you go away?*

Then after a short pause, *Oh! It was for that. So that he would believe!*

Hearing this, I rejoined my brother Luis and said to him, *Be careful about what you are thinking. The transmission of thought here is lightening fast!*

My brother responded: *Did something happen to you?*

Yes, I answered him. *I'll tell you about it later.*⁽⁷⁾

7. «When the ecstasy ended; I began writing down what had just happened . . . While doing this, the girls entered into a trance again. Soon two nuns appeared walking from the other side of the hill. Seeing them, Father Valentín turned excitedly toward me:

—*Look, Nuns!*

—*Yes, nuns, I answered, not understanding immediately.*

—*That's the Virgin!* He shouted out very excited.

And then I understood; this was the explanation of what the girls had said in the Cuadro: that the *nuns* could also be near to them. Not a single nun had been seen in the village, and so Father Valentín was disturbed in the beginning. Now, after a long time, the secret guests were appearing!»

(The two nuns can be identified. They were two religious from a congregation little known in Spain: *Daughters of Our Lady of the Scared Heart* which at the time had only one house in Cataluña. One of the religious, a native of Santander, was staying temporarily with her family in Roiz, a village not far from the valley of the Nansa River; she was Sister María of Jesus, later Provincial Superior of her congregation in Spain.)

«The nuns arrived in time and were thrilled by the girls' ecstasy. When the girls came back to themselves, they said, *The Virgin said that everyone can go up.* No one took it upon themselves to give out the news, and they asked me to do so.

I went up to the edge of that little flat area by the Pines, and I saw the crowd who had been waiting so long. I made a sign to them and everyone hurried up in great confusion. The Lord obliged them with a new ecstasy by the girls, truly very beautiful.» (Father Ramón Andreu, at a conference in Palma de Mallorca.)

Following such a day, we can imagine with what sentiments the Andreu brothers left Garabandal after their first visit.

QUESTION: *Father, did you believe from then on?*

FATHER: Without question all this attracted my attention and made me think that it wasn't a comedy, and that there must be material here for profound study. I also took notice that we were face to face with exciting phenomena both for the doctor and the theologian.

From that point to believing, there is—in spite of everything—a step that one doesn't make so easily. However, one thing remains certain: if I look back on the ensemble of events in which I have assisted with a sometimes excessive skepticism, I can testify and affirm again that we aren't dealing with a comedy or simulation on the part of the four girls.

Unfortunately, saying that amounts to saying nothing at all. To present the problem is not to solve it.

The question remains the same: *What is the cause of the phenomena at which I have assisted as an eyewitness and of which the story that I have recounted is only the smallest part, a drop of water in the sea?*

How many are the persons with whom I have shared my intense desire to understand? How many times have I asked for a convincing explanation? And I am still waiting for an answer to my questions.»⁽⁸⁾

Thus on the 29th of July, 1961, two brothers, ⁽⁹⁾ both priests, both religious, initially skeptics in their first impressions, would enter into the history of Garabandal where they were to play a major role in the unfolding and development of that history.

8. *Journal de Conchita*, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Paris, 1967.

9. We have already described one of them, Father Ramón María. The other, Father Luis, was younger; he was 36. He had made his ecclesiastic studies in Oña, Innsbruck (Austria) and Rome, and for some time he had been a professor at a theological seminary that the Jesuits had in Oña (Burgos). I say *had* because some years ago it was transferred to Bilbao.

Oña is a small historical city northeast of the capital of Burgos, situated between mountains covered with pines on the picturesque bank of the Oca River not far from its outflow into the Ebro. It had been the seat of a seminary of the ancient monastery of San Salvador—formerly belonging to the Benedictines—abandoned after the laws of Mendizabal in 1835. After the Jesuits vacated recently, the government officials of Burgos made the seminary into a psychiatric hospital.

In Crescendo

With the coming of August, summertime month par excellence, when Santander and its seaside resorts were overflowing with people, the influx of visitors coming from all regions into Garabandal acquired an accelerated pace. And at the same time, the events themselves also seemed to follow an accelerated pace as they increased in number and became more attention-getting.

On the first day of the month, as we have mentioned, things began with the beautiful addition in the recitation of the Hail Mary: *Holy Mary, Mother of God and our Mother*.

On August 3rd, the first ecstatic falls occurred together with many other phenomena, culminating in Conchita's return back to town after eight days in Santander, as previously described.

On August 4th, a Friday, the episode of the tape recorder took place.

On August 5th, among other things, everyone's attention was strongly attracted by an ecstatic march at tremendous speed going from the Pines all the way down to the church. Conchita was heard ardently asking pardon for having gone to the beach, and with no less ardor she implored the apparition to make a visible miracle so that *every-one would believe*.

Father Valentín wrote down in his notes:

«At two in the afternoon Loli, Conchita, and Jacinta went up beyond the Pines; there they knelt down and asked, *Where are we going? To the church?* And they undertook the descent in ecstasy.

At the church they stopped first before the main altar. Then they went to the altar of the Immaculate Conception and prayed a beautiful rosary—Conchita leading, the others answering. All this lasted about an hour and a half.

In the evening, toward 9:30, they returned in ecstasy to the church. I was at the gate when they came and I wanted to stop them, but I was unable. They went in front of the main altar, knelt down and began to speak. Conchita asked



On August 3rd, the first ecstatic falls occurred.

pardon for having gone to the beach and movie theater. Conchita wept. They also asked very insistently for her to perform a miracle. And they asked why Mari Cruz was not seeing her.»

The absence of Mari Cruz can be explained as due to pressures exerted on her parents, who were already doubting and upset, so that they kept her secluded far from the locations and phenomena of the other three. We know for example that during the days of August one of her aunts from Madrid was there, and she and some other people told the mother, *The child is sick and so are the others*. For that reason, they took her to the pastures whenever they could.

Although I cannot way with certainty that it occurred on this day, I am inserting something here which has been told to me and which reveals quite well the visionaries' concern during those days. Mari Cruz and Jacinta were taken up into ecstasy near the water fountain, and the people gathered around them. the final light of day was fading. The wife of Augusto Fernández saw that her son,

crippled with infantile paralysis, was next to the children in the middle of the crowd, and she feared that something might happen as the crowd pressed against him. She boldly made her way up to him to protect him from a possible avalanche of curious spectators. She reclined on the ground at his side, trying not to interfere with the vision of those behind her, and he had the chance to have her head almost leaning on Mari Cruz, whom she heard saying in a whisper:

«Look. The people don't believe. They only believe that we are crazy and foolish. Come. Perform a miracle. Even though it is only a little one . . . So that they might believe. Let three stars fall now.»

A few seconds later—to everyone's surprise and with almost everyone unaware of the reason—three shooting stars crossed brilliantly across the sky.

On Sunday August 6th, the girls had an ecstasy in the evening at 9:30 sharp. During the recitation

of the rosary, heavenly music was heard that lulled those hearing it and stirred up devotion as the girls were heard chanting the Hail Marys slowly, rhythmically, and fervently. They came out of ecstasy at 10:12; and then to conclude this ineffable evening of communication with heaven, as on so many other occasions, they went to pray a Station before the Blessed Sacrament. The girls did not pray badly, far from that; but the spectators were struck by the contrast between the two prayers. The second, although devout and well said, did not have either the voice, or the rhythm, or the feeling, or the cadence of the first. It was evident that the girls in ecstasy were before something or someone that transformed them.⁽¹⁰⁾

On August 7th, a Monday, there were more ecstasies. For example, one occurred at 2:00 in the afternoon to all four girls together.⁽¹¹⁾ It appears that this was one of the days in which the Virgin told the girls to stay in their homes without going outside because of the deluge of strangers. In this way the Virgin protected the girls from the crowd's indiscreet enthusiasm and curiosity and allowed them a little rest.

Spectacular Day!

August 8th of the year 1961 was to be a day especially marked in the unfolding of this history.

At 5:45 a.m. on that day, in the freshness of the early morning air and under a clear sky that was beginning to lighten up, a caravan of automobiles including a jeep left Aguilar de Campoo in the province of Palentia. Pulling away from the towering castle, which from afar appears to give the city a crown of crumbling stone walls, the cars got on the highway that would bring them to Cossío by way of Cervera,

10. Fr. Valentín ends his notes of August 6th like this: «Afterwards they prayed a station in the natural state. What a difference in their prayer!»

11. Another, still more interesting, after it had become dark. During it they made their way to the places where they had previously had apparitions; the village fountain, the apple tree in the calleja, the *cuadro*, the Pines. In each one of these places they knelt down with devotion for some time, and then departed. The tour ended in the church.

«It was a dark night; but they told me that they saw as though it were daylight.» (Fr. Valentín)

Piedras Luengas, Polaciones and Tudanca.

When the convoy arrived at Cossío, it was well into the morning. Father Luis María Andreu was among those traveling in a car with members of the Fontaneda family. In Cossío, they parked the cars and the jeep made three trips back and forth to bring all the passengers up to Garabandal.

Fr. Valentín Marichalar, the parish priest, very happy to see that Father Luis María had come, spoke to him, *You've come at the right time, since I have to go to Torrelavega today. I'll give you the keys to the church, and also entrust you with the care of the parish during my absence.*

Father Luis was pleased to accept and joked with Rafael Fontaneda.⁽¹²⁾ *Let's go, friend, since today I'm the pastor of Garabandal.*

Obviously this was an honor and privilege for him. Mr. Fontaneda was sure that Father Luis was extremely interested in everything about Garabandal since his first visit, although he had not revealed his opinion. Father had talked about visions in general, of their forms and types, of the importance of psychological studies for a suitable judgment on these phenomena. It was seen that he had a passionate interest in the subject.

Acting as pastor, Father Luis had the tower bells rung for Mass. And though it was a work day, many people came, both strangers and people from the village. «Some twenty people, among them Conchita, Jacinta and Mary Loli received Holy Communion.»⁽¹³⁾

«The Mass that Father celebrated»—Rafael Fontaneda assures us—«was exceptionally said. All those present were impressed.»

Of this there can be no doubt, since there were so many witnesses. To what was this due?

«At first, some attributed it to the presence of the visionaries. Later, it was related to the fact that this was going to be Father's last Mass, and that somehow he had an unusual premonition.

12. Son and Nephew of Rafael y don Antiano Fontaneda Ibañez, owners of a well-known business.

13. From the notebook of material taken down by Father Luis María himself on that day in Garabandal, and which his brother Ramón now possesses.



The sanctuary at the time that Father Luis said his last Mass

Also a minor incident may have contributed to it: when going to pour the cruets, they were found empty. The server ran to a neighboring house to find wine, and soon came back with it; but there was a suspicion that it might have been spoiled. Father Luis collected himself a few moments in prayer — his eyes closed, his hands in front of his breast — then he made a sign to serve the wine and the Mass proceeded with complete serenity and devotion. All this, united to the excitement of the apparitions of the evening before and the waiting for those that were expected that day, could have had a decisive influence upon the collective devotion and fervor in the celebration of the Mass. It is certain that the people, on leaving the church, commented on the silence, the piety, and the spirit of faith with which the celebrant and congregation were united in intimate communion before the altar.»⁽¹⁴⁾

There was nothing else new on that morning; but

14. Sánchez-Ventura, page 115. (Spanish edition)

everyone was waiting, since the girls had announced an apparition for slightly after lunch, at 2:00 in the afternoon. At that time, all four girls, accompanied by a large crowd, went into the church.

«At 2:11 they went into ecstasy. They smiled, especially Jacinta. Mari Cruz gestured timidly.»

These are the first words that Father Luis wrote down in his notebook. Then he began putting down what he was able to hear of the conversations.

«The Father» — writes Raphael Fontaneda — «was next to the girls, and as he had done on previous occasions, was carefully writing down all that they did and said. But he seemed extremely absorbed in the ecstasy, and those closest to him saw silent tears run down his cheeks.»⁽¹⁵⁾ Obviously he felt the presence of

15. On the following day at Reinoso when Father Ramón María Andreu was informed of these details, he could not hide his amazement, since he stated, *He had never seen his brother cry.*

something extraordinary.»

Father Luis was not the only one taking notes; there were two other spectators who also were taking down notes so that the main points would not be forgotten; a seminarian from Aguilar named Andrés Pardo, and the renowned Dominican priest, Antonio Royo Marín.

From the notes of one or the other, we know that among other things Conchita said to the vision:

«You know what I'm telling you? That you must give a sign; that . . . only one sign . . . at Lourdes and Fatima you gave a sign . . . Do you want me to show you all that I brought you? (She presents the rosaries and medals.) You have to kiss them . . . How do I look with the short hair? Are you coming this evening? Oh, how nice! . . . How old are you? . . . Oh . . . Three more than I? Six? Oh, yes! I am twelve . . . six more . . . eighteen. Seven more than Mari Cruz.»

Conchita was not the only one talking. Loli asked the reason why the Angel hadn't come. She insisted then in the same request for a sign:

«Give one right now! You always say that you'll give it, that you'll give . . .»

Jacinta took part in the conversation too, asking among other things whether on that night they should be in pairs again as at other times, each pair in a different house . . . (16)

Naturally they talked about the priests that were there that day:

«Two priests came today; one is a Jesuit, and he said Mass very well . . . What is his name? Something like Andrés . . . The Dominican . . . In Santander we saw many Dominicans . . . Father Juan⁽¹⁷⁾ told priests not to come. Why did he do that?»

Father Luis was writing down the incidents of

16. The one who took down the words of Jacinta and Mari Cruz was a seminarian named Andrés Pardo. He has now been a priest for several years and served on the National Commission on the Liturgy.

17. This seems to refer to the pastor of Carmona, Father Juan González Gómez, a native of Garabandal, who soon adopted a hostile or negative attitude toward the events, and was opposed to priests going up to the village. All those in the village called him Father Juan or simply Juanito.



“One is a Jesuit, and he said mass very well.”

the ecstasy minute by minute:

«2:19: Loli makes a brusque gesture to fall forward. 2:24: Conchita cries. (Was it because of what had happened in Santander? She had just mentioned it). A few seconds later Loli falls and Mari Cruz supports her, holding her up by her back. 2:35: The four fall—we tried to hold them up. They remain with their gaze upward, without blinking. 2:40: They get up and kneel down. 2:43: They go backwards toward the altar of the Virgin of the Rosary; falling down backwards in front of it with their backs on the ground, they begin to pray the rosary . . . 2:47: They get up and continue the rosary on their knees. A hand is waved in front of their eyes, and they don't blink; they blink sometimes by their own efforts, but very seldom. A certain rigidity is noted in their jaws . . . When beginning the litany there is almost an appearance of losing equilibrium again . . . They finish the prayer with an Our Father to their Guardian Angel, a Salve to the Virgin of Mount Carmel and an Apostles Creed to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The ecstasy ends about 3:00.»

However, during this ecstasy something was predicted for the evening. And the thing would not be insignificant, since they were heard to say, *«How long is it going to be? Two hours? . . . Where are we going to be kneeling?»*

Miracle! Miracle!
Miracle! Miracle!



“Here is where the chapel will be built.”

A little after 9:00 in the evening, the second session of that unforgettable day begins. Once again the four girls assemble in the church and before the main altar fall into ecstasy. They breathe deeply. Then they laugh, except for Conchita; she speaks, *«Yes, as you wish, as you command . . . We don't care what direction we go. As you say . . . But we haven't given any proof, and the people don't believe.»*

Toward 9:40 they get up and leave the church in an ecstatic march. They stop at those locations in the village where ecstasies had taken place, and they pray there . . .

Never had *stations* been made with such devotion in Garabandal. The people who silently followed the girls during their marches and devotedly accompanied them in their prayers were as if taken up by supernatural emotion. It seemed like *the way of the Lord*, the way of mercy for that village until then so lost and forgotten. Here the footsteps of God and the Virgin traced their way to people regarded as nothing by the world.

In contrast to this world in a rush to secularization, what a night at Garabandal! And it was not the only one. It appeared destined to consecrate everything—the streets, the corners, the houses,

the lonely trails, the quiet fields, the starry skies. In all the places where it could, heaven made contact with the earth; and in all the places it could, the inept human creature raised himself up to the one who watches in all places, near and far across a subtle veil.

Oh noche que guiaste! In a tremulous silence, under an infinite summer sky, all that could be heard were the prayer at the *stations* and the rhythmic footsteps of the four girls locking arms while in rapture.

Toward the end of the march they were heard to say, *«On what day will we see you again, so that the people may come? . . . The people say that this is a sickness of ours, and the young boys have thrown stones at us . . . Well, if you are happy with us, it doesn't matter.»*

And when it seemed that everything was going to end, they undertook an ascent to the Pines that all the witnesses have classified as *impressive* not only on account of the appearance of the four girls, but also because of the speed and lightness of their march.

On arriving at the top, Loli, who seemed to be trembling a little, said while talking with the Vision, *«Yes, here is where the chapel will be built . . . This is a good spot . . . Should we stay*



“We heard him shout the word *Miracle!*”

here?»⁽¹⁸⁾ And they knelt down.

They sang a hymn to St. Michael. They kissed something in the air . . . And it was at this moment when Father Luis María Andreu . . . Let us listen to the testimony of Raphael Fontaneda:

18. According to information given to me, on the first day that the girls fell into ecstasy at the Pines — a date that I have not been able to identify with certainty — Conchita was heard to say among other things:

«It seems that I was taken up, without knowing where, to this place . . . I know the name of the Angel: St. Michael. The same as my brother; but my brother without the Saint . . . Then, the chapel will be here . . . But it can't be done here! . . . I don't know how it is going to be done here.»

Recently I questioned Jacinta:

—Did the Virgin tell you anything about the things that should be done here in the village, as for example chapels, a way of the cross?

—*From what I remember, the only thing that she asked for explicitly was a chapel dedicated to St. Michael.*

—Where? In the place where the chapel is now?

—*No, at the Pines.*

—When should it be built?

—*When the Church permits it.*

«At the Pines, Father Luis was watching the girls closely. It appeared that he didn't wish to lose a single detail of what was taking place.

Suddenly we observed a tremendous excitement sweep over him, and four times—obviously overwhelmed—we heard him shout the word *Miracle!*»⁽¹⁹⁾

Not only were the spectators able to observe Father Luis' trance; the girls, swept away from the normal world of the senses, saw him also. This was the first and only time that any person besides the visionaries came into their field of vision.

At the end of the rosary, the four of us were in ecstasy.

And we began to walk toward the Pines. And when we arrived there Father Luis María said, *Miracle! Miracle!*

19. Father Ramón was also astounded when they told him about this since he knew that his brother was known for being a calm person, and he himself could never remember having seen his brother in a state of excitement.

**And he was looking upwards.
We saw him ourselves.
And in our ecstasies we have never
seen anyone except the Virgin.
And we saw Father Luis.**



And the Virgin told us that he was seeing her and the Miracle.⁽²⁰⁾

20. This does not refer to a miracle, but to THE MIRACLE. The visionaries, especially Conchita, have repeatedly spoken of it. It is something still to be realized, a very important chapter in the history of Garabandal, still sealed in suspense. What she is telling us in this episode about Father Luis María Andreu is that on that night of August 8th, 1961, he was able to view beforehand, by a most singular favor of the Virgin what neither the visionaries nor anyone else has as yet seen, although it has been foretold for everyone.

What we will see then—when the great day arrives—or whom we will see is still a mystery . . . The fact that Fr. Luis was not able to survive after his ecstasy at the Pines might make us recall this passage from Exodus (33: 18-20):

Moses said: Show me Your Glory. I beseech you.

And God answered, I will let My splendor pass in front of you, and I will pronounce My name before you.

I have compassion on whomever I will. And I show pity to whomever I please.

You cannot see My face, for man cannot see Me and live.

How can the fragile and weak human creature contemplate the Supreme Being—Who infinitely surpasses man—without disintegrating?

But the desire remains, and we can only repeat Moses' request and the passionate urge of St. John of the Cross:

Reveal Your presence.

And show me the beauty of Your face.

Regard the suffering of love

That can only be healed by Your presence,

And your countenance.

God alone can strengthen us to contemplate his marvels.

Several days later Father Ramón María, who had not been in Garabandal on August 8th, learned from the girls something more about the vision of his brother: «He was kneeling with us, drops of shining perspiration on his forehead; and the Virgin was looking at him . . . She seemed to be saying to him, *Very soon you will be at my side.*»



“The Virgin was looking at him.”

It was about 10:00 at night. Father Luis came back to normal and «the girls began the descent, saying in ecstasy that they were going to the church. They said this as they usually did in their conversation with the Virgin . . . Father Royo Marín advised those present to run to the church since, according to his expression, *The girls had wings on their feet.*» (Testimony of Raphael Fontaneda)

If the ascent had been rapid, the descent was almost vertiginous. It is not surprising that the girls lost two rosaries from the ones that had been entrusted to them to present to the Virgin to kiss. One of these belonged to a seminarian. Conchita, who was the one to whom he had given it, mentioned it in the church: she was heard to say, «*I lost the rosary . . . The one belonging to the student . . . I feel bad about it. Should I go back? . . . Oh . . . Where did I drop it? . . . Up there? . . . Higher than where we saw you? Oh!*»



Father Luis (on right) with mother and his two priest brothers

The other belonged to Father Luis. His was not an ordinary rosary but one of those that were beginning to be used at the time, shaped like a ring, with a cross on top and ten small protrusions to count the Hail Marys. It is put on the index finger on which it is revolved with the thumb. On leaving the church, Loli went up to Father, *I've lost your rosary, but the Virgin has told me where it is; Let's go find it.* Julia, the mother of the girl, heard this and objected. *No, not today, since it is already late. Wait until tomorrow and when there is daylight you can find it.*

Father Luis immediately approved Julia's sensible decision, and a little while later said to the girl, *Loli, I'm going to leave tonight; when you find the rosary, don't tell anyone except my brother Ramón. If I don't come back, he surely will.*

Not many hours later, the hidden prophetic meaning of those words would be revealed. The little rosary was found at the exact location that the Virgin had indicated; but its owner would no longer have a need for it.

The miraculous finale of that unforgettable

August 8th, Conchita gives us in her diary:

The people said that we prayed a Credo at the Pines.

That day was the first in which the Virgin taught us to pray.⁽²¹⁾

And we went down to the village in the same state.

And when we arrived at the church, the Virgin left our view.

As the Virgin had not appeared to Mari Cruz for several days, she stayed in ecstasy with the Virgin.

And she went into the church.

21. From the beginning the Virgin taught the girls to do all things well, especially those things more directly concerned with God; and she instructed them above all in their way of *acting*. It seems that on this day she began a more complete course of instruction on this theme, adding explanations by word and lessons by her example.

If the reader has previously encountered in Chapter 5 many of the things that are now being brought forth, it should be understood that Chapter 5 attempted to present in advance a panoramic view of what the summer of 1961 was like in San Sebastián de Garabandal.



“The Virgin said the prayer ahead of her in order to teach her to pray.”

And before the altar of the Virgin of the Rosary and St. Michael the Archangel, she began to pray the Creed with the Virgin very slowly.

And Mari Cruz said that the Virgin said the prayer ahead of her in order to teach her to pray slowly.

After the Credo, she prayed a Salve.

And then she made the sign of the cross very slowly, very well.

And she talked with the Virgin, and said, *Oh, how good that the Infant Jesus comes.*

How long it has been since He has come.

***Why do you wait so long to come to me and come more often to the others?*⁽²²⁾**

22. Of the four visionaries, Mari Cruz was the one who had the least number of apparitions and the first one from whom they were taken away. Why is this? God alone can answer this question.

And no disfavor to the girl can be concluded from this, since if it is true that there may be human obstacles to the Divine Action, it is also true that God can distribute His gifts to whomever He pleases, without doing wrong to anyone. The *inequality* can be recalled with which He acted toward the children in the *communications* at Fatima.

Because of this, could there have formed in the heart of Mari Cruz a form of bitterness or even envy to which the many visitors contributed by their preferences for the other girls? At present we do not have information to answer this.

This was heard by several people who were close to her: among them were Fr. Luis María Andreu, a seminarian, and Fr. Royo Marín.

Valuable Testimony

It was natural that those who had been witnesses of the events on that afternoon and evening began commenting among themselves on leaving the church. In this group Father Royo Marín said, *I'm not infallible; but I am a specialist in these questions;*⁽²³⁾ *and it appears to me that the visions of the girls are true. I can perceive four positive signs which do not leave room for doubt.*

Then Raphael Fontaneda came up and said to him, *Father, if the affair is as important as you say, why don't you stay here a few more days to study it better?*

Father Marín responded, *It's not possible for me to stay now; but this thing is so clear that there's no room for doubt.*

And it should be noted that Father Marín had gone up to Garabandal more skeptical than the others; childlike simplicity is not usually the characteristic of clergy who are cognizant of their diplomas and doctorates.

It was late at night when the troop of travelers that had left Aguilar de Campoo at daybreak began the descent from Garabandal — some on foot, others in the jeep. By deference, Father Luis María was made to go down in the vehicle. During the trip all could observe that he was overflowing with an interior joy, and he manifested this in a thousand ways, at the same time declaring his absolute certainty about the truth of what the visionaries had said.

In Cossío it was necessary to wait for those who were making their way down by foot. Father Luis did not get out of the jeep; he was almost asleep when Father Valentín Marichalar, the parish priest arrived. Then he spoke very clearly to the priest in a serious voice:

23. A few years previously he had published an extensive and very documented *Theology of Christian Perfection* which had great successes in the latin-speaking countries.



Father Luis with his mother and youngest brother on the day of his first Mass.

«Father Valentín, what the girls say is true; but don't repeat around here what I am telling you now. The Church should use great prudence in these matters.»

That night before retiring, Fr. Valentín carefully wrote down in his diary what Father Luis had said to him so seriously at the time of departure.

On the return to Aguilar from Cossío, a different route was chosen than the one used for arrival, longer but better: through Torrelavega and Reinosa. Continuing the description of Raphael Fontaneda:

«In Cossío we departed in the various cars that made up the expedition. Father Luis was asked to go in my brother's car, but he preferred to come with me since he had made the original trip there with me. He sat down in front next to the driver José Salceda; in the back seat were my wife Carmen, my 8 year old daughter Mari Carmen, and myself.

Along the way we were discussing what we had seen that day . . . Father Luis told us that he had exchanged opinions with Father Royo Marín and that they were both in total agreement.

My wife, as well as I and José Salceda were all impressed by Father's deep and intense joy, as well as his conviction. He spoke without haste and many times repeated these phrases. *What a gift the Virgin has given me! I can't have the least doubt about the truth of what is happening to the girls.*

In Torrelavega we caught up with the jeep that had taken us from Cossío to Garabandal; it was stopped with the people from Aguilar de Campoo. Our driver drove up to see if they needed anything and he and Father Luis talked a few minutes with the passengers.

On beginning the trip again, I said to Father, *Father, why don't you try to sleep a little?* He accepted the suggestion and slept about an hour, until just before arriving in Reinosa.⁽²⁴⁾ Then he woke up and said, *I've slept very well and I'm in good shape! I feel great. I'm not even tired.*

All the rest of us were half asleep, since it was

24. An important industrial village in the Cantabrian Mountains to the southwest of Santander.

close to 4:00 in the morning. We stopped at a fountain to drink and refresh ourselves. Father Luis then asked the driver if he too had taken something to drink, and José Salceda answered that he had put some water in his eyes, because his eyes had the greater need.⁽²⁵⁾

Again on the road, Father returned to his exclamations, *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 shouldn't 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.*⁽²⁶⁾ *I can't 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.*

He stopped speaking with the last sentence. Then I asked him something, and getting no answer, I said to him, *Father, is something wrong?*

No, nothing. I am sleeping. And he leaned his head forward, at the same time letting out a soft sound as if clearing his throat.

José Salceda turned his head toward him and seeing his eyes, shouted, *Father is very sick.*

Quickly my wife reached for his wrist to take his pulse, and cried out, *Stop! Stop! There's no pulse. There is a clinic here. He must be taken there immediately.*

I thought that it was only a case of car

25. All the cars that made up the convoy came to a stop around a fountain on the outskirts of Reinosa. The passengers got out to stretch their legs and refresh themselves; only Father Luis remained in his seat with the car door open. Gradually most of the other people gathered around him and asked him questions . . .

After awhile the trip was begun again with the priest's car following in last place. On entering the streets of the city, completely deserted at the time, Father began to say these important things that have been transmitted to us by Mr. Fontaneda, and which were the last words of that true son of St. Ignatius.

26. The girls' relationship toward the Virgin appeared now to Father Luis—after his mysterious trance—as normal and proper. On the contrary, the *learned* of the Bishop's Commission found in that relationship a strong reason for coming to their negative position. How could this be with such *imbecile and puerile conversations!*

sickness, and when the car stopped, I went to open the door while saying to him, *Don't worry, Father, this is nothing. It will pass right away with a little fresh air.*

But my wife insisted, *He should be taken immediately to the clinic.*

—*Don't talk foolishly.*

—*Look, He is unconscious!*

We took him to a clinic a few meters away and the nurse who opened the door for us told us immediately that he was dead. My wife replied that couldn't be. And that something should be done. The nurse gave him an injection, while José Salceda ran to call a doctor and a priest. The doctor⁽²⁷⁾ came in ten minutes but the only thing he could do was pronounce him dead. The parish priest came right after and administered Extreme Unction.

After the initial shock and anxiety, we began to act. I telephoned his brother Fr. Ramón, who was in Valladolid preaching the Spiritual Exercises to a community of religious. I also called Aguilar de Campoo and a few hours later my brothers and my brother-in-law arrived. Fortunately Fr. Royo Marín⁽²⁸⁾ also arrived in Reinosa and he accompanied and consoled us. And toward the middle of the morning Fr. Ramón María Andreu presented himself.»

We can imagine Father Ramón's feelings on finding the dead body of his 36 year old younger brother. The news of his passing away had come as a brutal blow. How could he have anticipated such a thing? Concerning Father Luis' illnesses, he knew only of an allergy to grass and hay that caused him to take medicine in the springtime. And he had good reason to believe him full of health, since at Oña he played sports frequently and during his vacations left with other companions to hike in the mountains. He was a man who walked very

27. Dr. Vicente González. The hospital to which they brought the priest was the Clínica Montesclaros (without doubt in honor of the Virgin of Montesclaros who has a sanctuary not far from Reinosa and is held in much honor throughout the region).

28. Father Royo Marín had relatives in Reinosa and this explains his stop there, as he certainly was not aware of the unexpected death of Father Luis María.



“They hold their eyes wide open but those eyes are dead to all sensorial stimulation.”

much. Everyone expected him to be around for many more years.

But the designs of God are inscrutable.

Father Ramón María, who had received the telephone call in Valladolid at 6:15 in the morning, arrived in Reinosa at 11:00 a.m. After praying before the body, he gathered the few things that belonged to his brother, among them a notebook that he carried in a pocket of his cassock—notebook No. 3—in which he had concisely put down the incidents of the previous day at Garabandal.

Then he was able to converse with Father Royo Marín and from his lips received these statements:

«There is no doubt about Garabandal; the least that one could do is take it seriously. The ecstatic marches are a very clear indication to me. They take place in the darkness, and are so swift that we aren't able to follow the girls. The girls don't look where they are going and they don't stumble over anything; I observed merely slight sliding on top of the wet grass. They hold their eyes wide open but those eyes are dead to all the sensorial stimulation that affects all of us.

Your brother was very learned; he must have been a good professor. He analyzed the thing well and we agreed on everything.»⁽²⁹⁾

29. Father Royo Marín's opinion about Garabandal was very firm.

Ten days later, on August 18th, he called from Castro Urdiales (a city on the coast near Santander) to a group of people who wanted to go with him and Father Ramón to Santander to report the news of what had happened.

«I'm sick with a temperature of 104, and regret that I can't accompany you. But you go to the Bishop and tell him on my part, without any reservation, that what is happening at San Sebastián de Garabandal is supernatural with all certainty. That at least is my opinion.

And that he has an obligation to go and see what is happening. If he doesn't want to do so, take him if possible . . . There is a grave duty to accept what God does with sufficient clearness.»

After those days in August, Father Royo Marín did not find the occasion to return to the village. Did he change his opinion? In the beginning of 1965 he was in Santander, preaching at a church in the city. One day, having completed Mass, several people went into the sacristy and asked him, *Father, what do you think about the apparitions?*

«I wasn't able to return to Garabandal. As a consequence, I have no opinion about what happened after my last visit. But concerning what happened while I was there, I have no doubt that it was true.»



“He died of joy!”

To Your Faithful, Lord

If Father Luis María Andreu did not die of illness, since no one knew of any in him, then from what did he die?

Let us listen again to Mr. Fontaneda:

«Whenever my wife and I have discussed those scenes that so terribly affected us, we felt a peace and at the same time a deep serenity. And we are only able to come to one answer for the question: *From what did Father die? He died of joy!*

Even though he passed in a fraction of a second from a completely normal state to the state of a cadaver, a smile remained on his lips . . .

When I returned to Garabandal I heard what the girls said to me about Father and understanding something of the ecstatic conversations in which they had spoken of him and with him all the scenes of that sorrowful early morning of

August 9th in Reinosa held for me a special meaning, in which the Providence of God and the Love of Mary played an important part.

This is the happiest day of my life, Father Luis had told me. I wanted to ask him the meaning of that sentence, since I would think that for a priest the happiest day would be that of his ordination to the priesthood or the day of his first Mass; but I did not have the time. Could his words be an announcement of his entrance into eternal happiness?

All this seems clear when we hear Father Royo, *Truly the happiest day in one's life is the day of coming into the arms of God.*

And for Father Luis María Andreu, that day was August 9, 1961, at 4:20 in the morning, returning from San Sebastián de Garabandal.»

After all this, we can understand better the case of the first death of Garabandal. The body of Father Luis could not sustain the truth and the joy of what he had seen.

Have not the saints, the great favorites of God,



Father Luis — a priest forever

confessed many times that when seeing or hearing certain things about Him, they would have died of joy or of pain, if the Lord had not come especially to their aid? It is clear that Father Luis, left to his own strength by the mysterious disposition of God, did not last more than a few hours with the truth and the joy of Garabandal. And thus he was its first death. But he died with the sign of a martyr, as he sealed the truth of his testimony with the laying down of his life.⁽³⁰⁾

His last words were very obligating and grave, leaving no solution except to accept them, for they should be received with the respect owed to the testimony of witnesses who give their life as proof of the truth of their words.

He gave his all to a cause and succumbed, but he lost nothing in pouring himself out. As the preface in the ancient liturgy for the Mass of the Dead states, *For to your faithful, O Lord, life is changed, not taken away; and when the place of our earthly*

30. *Martyr* is a word of Green origin, meaning *witness*. The early church used it to designate someone who gave public testimony to Christ, or confessed his faith in Christ before the tribunal, even at the cost of his life.

sojourn turns into dust, an eternal dwelling awaits us in the heavens.

Beyond the Twilight

In the sight of the unwise,⁽³¹⁾ it seemed that everything was finished for him, and that it would have been much better not to have undertaken an adventure so *unnecessary*, in which none of the many *wise* ecclesiastics would have prematurely involved themselves.

31. **But the souls of the just are in the Hand of God; and the torment of death shall not touch them.**

In the sight of the unwise, they seemed to die; and their departure was taken for misery;

And their going away from us, for utter destruction; but they are in peace.

And though in the sight of men they suffered torments, their hope is full of immortality . . . God has tried them and found them worthy of Himself.

The just shall shine, and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds.

They shall judge nations and rule over people, and their Lord shall reign forever. (Book of Wisdom 3: 1-8)



“Father Luis’ funeral rites were completed in Oña.”

They closed his eyes and read the prayers for the dead; they placed him in a coffin and his relatives and friends wept; they lowered him into the grave and *May he rest in peace*. On the next day those still alive went back to their work and play, talking from time to time, about *poor Father Luís*. The noble Spanish soil fell over the poor coffin⁽³²⁾ of a poor religious who owned nothing. Soon he would be forgotten and there would only remain a simple wooden cross painted black to indicate to the few visitors the name of someone who could have been or done so much in his life . . .

32. He was buried at Oña behind the ancient Roman monastery church that now is a parish church, in the part of the cemetery holding the remains of the Jesuits who died during the years that the theological seminary was there.

Fr. Luis Andreu was born in Bilbao on July 3rd, 1925. He was ordained a priest at Oña (Burgos) on July 30th, 1955 by the missionary bishop Federico Melendro, who had to leave his diocese in Anking, China when that gigantic country was overrun by Maoistic communism. He sang his first Mass on the following July 31st, the feast of St. Ignatius, at the Ignatian sanctuary in Loyola. He was 6 years a priest, and 36 years of age at the time of his death.

The twilight of total darkness is only for those who live within earthly limits. For Father Luis was not to remain a prisoner to the darkness. He would pass mysteriously from the nightfall of life to the dawn of a day that would know no sunset.

The trumpet of triumph would sound for the body that had departed on the route to Reinosa. *'Exsultabunt Domino ossa humiliata.'* *The bones that have been humbled will rejoice in the Lord.*

But it will not be necessary to await the final trumpet to have proof of his new life. Here are some notes from his brother Fr. Ramón:

«Father Luis’ funeral rites were completed in Oña, and after spending a couple of days with my mother who lived in Bilbao, I went to Garabandal on August 14th. On entering the village the four girls came out to greet me, since they had seen me coming up the final stretch of the road.

They told me that on hearing that Father Luis

had died, they had cried with sorrow . . .⁽³³⁾ That the Virgin had also spoken to them about the death of my brother, and that they had said to her, *Why don't you tell us, since you know?* The girls said, *The Virgin laughed. So much!* And they made gestures illustrating '*So much!*'

Then Loli handed me the ring rosary that she had received from my brother to give to the Virgin to kiss, and which she had later lost. *The Virgin told me so clearly where it was that I found it right away by doing no more than lifting up a few stones.*

The conversation with the girls was pleasant and extensive. They told him:

«That at the third call they felt something inside that they couldn't stop . . . That the Virgin was always the same, although she appeared sometimes with different garments and under a different title . . . That since a few days before August 8th, she had appeared to them individually . . . That she didn't have the same visions with Mari Cruz as with the others . . . That had been because her mother had kept her shut in the house at times.»

The pleasure that Father Ramón felt from this first meeting was soon disturbed. He was interviewed sometime later by the French editor of *Conchita's Diary*.

«It was August 14th. I had come from burying my brother Luis. On arriving at Garabandal, a boy from Burgos came up to me and said, The children have said during an ecstasy "What a pleasure! Are we going to speak with Father Luis?" I became depressed. And I

33. Conchita writes it down in her diary like this:

The following day the four of us went to sweep out the church.

And while were sweeping, Jacinta's mother arrived very upset, and said to us, Father Luis María Andreu has died.

And we didn't believe it since we had seen him the day before.

We left the church half-swept and went 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 most good mother we have in heaven!

And he died.

thought that this had to be a typical case of auto-suggestion. My brother's death had made an impression on the children and the result could be seen! I wanted to leave Garabandal.

—And yet you stayed?

FR. RAMON: Actually I did stay. But it was because those who had accompanied me didn't want to leave . . .

—What happened then?

FR. RAMON: I came back near the children in ecstasy, and I heard again the conversation with Father Luis. After a little while I didn't know what to think. I was truly astounded. The girls were repeating in front of me the words of the Vision. And I heard them describe my brother's death and funeral rites. They were giving a number of very precise details about the special rites of a priest's burial. They even knew that some exceptions to the traditional regulations in the dress of the deceased had taken place with Father Luis. For example, a biretta had not been put on my brother's head, and the chalice, which should have been held in his hands, had been replaced by a crucifix. The girls also gave the reasons for these changes.

On another occasion, I heard the girls in ecstasy say that my brother Luis had died before making his profession. They also spoke about me and my vows. They knew the precise date, the exact place where they had been pronounced, the name of a Jesuit who had made them at the same time.

You can understand my amazement and my confusion in the face of this string of rigorously exact details, since I definitely knew the girls could not know these things, at least not through human intelligence.»

It appears that all the things that Father Ramón responded to his French questioner, *as a whole*, did not happen or were not heard on the day of his arrival on August 14th. Part of these things at least must pertain to what happened on the following days.



“The chalice, which should have been held in his hands, had been replaced by a crucifix.”



“After the death of Father Luis, the Virgin told us that we were going to speak with him.”

Concerning the first vision on August 14th,⁽³⁴⁾ which was about 10:00 at night, we have his brief notation:

«The girls went outside in an ecstatic march, their heads turned upwards. They went through the streets of the village, sometimes joined together, sometimes separated. When they joined together at some spot, they broke out in cries of joy.

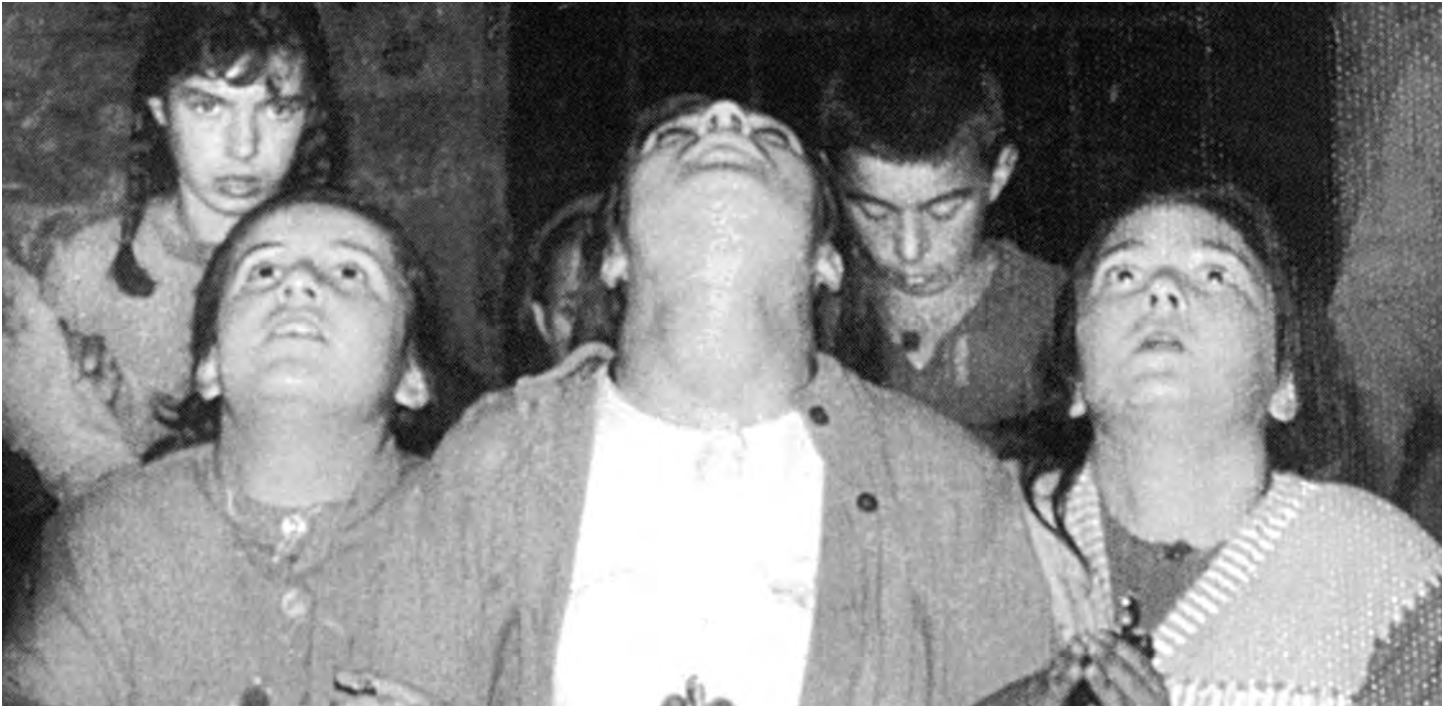
And so it was for two long periods, from 10:00 until 12:00. The people followed them, praying. But it is hard to walk everywhere with them because they go so fast. And they never

34. «On the 14th of August Father Andreu came another time; he was with the girls almost all day and during the night up until 3 o'clock. Also in the village on that day were Alberto Martín Artajo (former Minister of Foreign Affairs), Father Lucio Rodrigo (a Jesuit professor in Comillas), and many people.» (Father Valentín's notes)

stumble, even with the many stones that are there, or with the mud, or with anything. I followed them at times, and at times I waited at some location, because their paths through the village are identical: in all directions and through all the streets. On one of my stops, some very excited people came looking for me at once, because they had heard the girls talking about my brother and saying, *Then we will hear him speak? Oh, what a pleasure! He was very good!*»

Many times after this date, the girls felt the presence of Father Luis in ecstasy and heard his voice, holding conversation with him, although not seeing his face. Conchita wrote in her diary:

Several days after the death of Father Luis, the Virgin told us that we were going to speak to him.



“He called to us one after the other. But we didn’t see him; we only heard his voice.”

On August 15th, the feastday of Our Lady, there were many tourists who had come to amuse themselves and they were causing scandal.

That was the day that the Virgin told us we would talk with Father Luis María Andreu.

But since there was a scandal, he didn't come.

At 4 in the morning on the next day, at the same time that Father Luis had died, the Virgin appeared to me in my kitchen and said to me: *Father will not come today, but he will come tomorrow.*⁽³⁵⁾

35. From the report of Fr. Ramón:

«Cases of this have been repeated. When the public were very numerous and had a picnic attitude, with drinking and music or worldly songs, the Vision did not take place. And the public was disappointed.

The first time that I observed this was on the evening of August 15th, 1961, the feast of the Assumption. That day all the crowd waited in vain. At the sight of the crowd comporting themselves as if it were a party, on hearing the worldly songs and seeing the state of semi-drunkenness in which some were found, several people from the village—simple people—said to me, *There surely will be nothing today. This happened another time. And here we are glad that nothing occurs when they come this way.*

On another day, Amaliuca, the 11 year old sister of Loli, called me to tell me in secret that Jacinta was seeing the Virgin in her home. I went and found her there in a

On the next day between 8:00 or 9:00 the Virgin appeared to us, smiling very much as usual, and said to the four of us, *Father Luis will come now and speak to you.*

And after awhile he came, and he called us one after the other.

But we didn't see him; we only heard his voice.

state of trance . . . I heard what she said to the Virgin. *Why are you going so soon? Oh! Just like on the day of Our Lady . . . They are singing . . .*

I went out on the street and asked, *Is someone singing here?*

Yes, they answered me, *There is a group here that is having a party.*

And there was no vision until that group that had come in a bus departed. This has happened on other occasions. I have been able to ascertain five at least; and on the five days the visitors' impropriety and irreverence was obvious.»

On the 15th day of August a person, who would become one of the most qualified witnesses of what was happening, came up for the first time to Garabandal: he was Doctor Celestino Ortiz Pérez, a pediatrician from Santander. He wrote me:

«I came with my family, I was there from 7 at night until 6 in the morning when I had to leave to be on time for work. I didn't see anything. My family stayed in the village until 9 in the morning, at which time they were picked up. It was during this visit that we got to know Father Ramón María Andreu; on learning that I was a doctor, he showed great concern that I examine the girls.»

It was exactly the same as when he spoke on earth.

And after giving us advice, he also told us something for his brother, Father Ramón.



Father Luis and brother Ramón

And he taught us words in French, and even to pray in Greek.

He taught us words in German and in English, too.

After a while, we didn't hear his voice anymore.

And the Virgin spoke to us and stayed for a moment and left.

It is certain that several times in their ecstasies the girls pronounced words and phrases in languages completely unknown to them. There are trustworthy witnesses of this. In the French edition of *Conchita's Diary*, Fr. Ramón María Andreu's statement is printed:

«The girls have certainly spoken more than once in foreign languages. I myself heard one



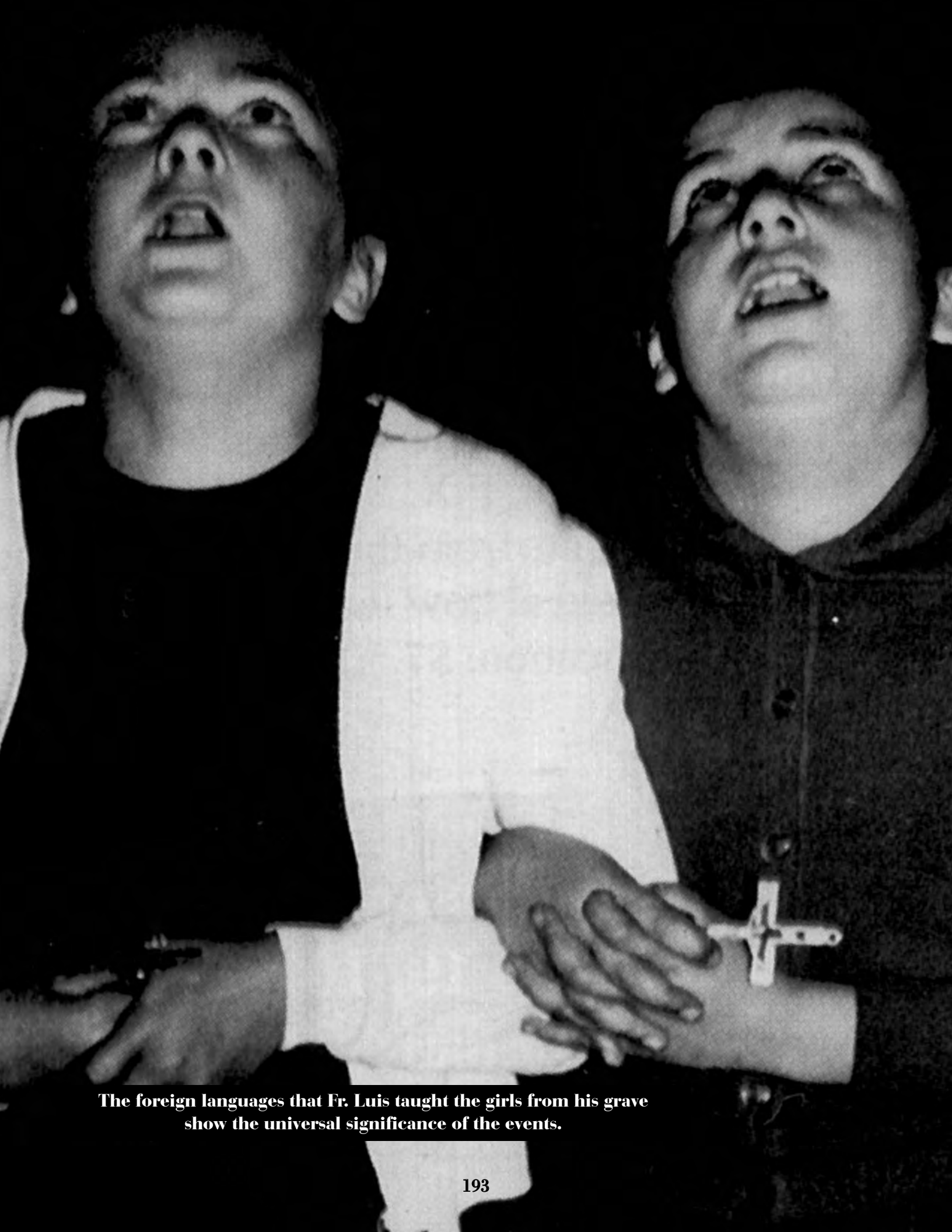
“in foreign languages”

of them recite the Hail Mary in Greek. I have in my possession a letter from Conchita, in which I would like to point out certain parts in which she informed me of what she had learned in French from hearing my brother during an ecstasy.»

Some have expressed the opinion that these words and sentences in foreign languages seem to be a game, rather pointless, and even a little too ridiculous to be admitted as proceeding from God. With due respect to their opinion, this observation can be made:

Everything coming from God has its purpose, but not everything from God appears to us immediately perfectly clear as to its aim or final purpose. God always acts toward us in the realm of the unknown. His plans gradually reveal themselves, following His designs and proportional to our acceptance of them, or at least to our not putting obstacles in the way. When the Divine Hand is found in any given reality as a whole, it is wrong to attempt to reject it because all the details do not appear clear.

What does Scripture show to be the style of God? He certainly does not always declare from the beginning all His intentions and plans and give immediate explanations of everything He is going to do. We must learn to trust in Him, and because of those things that we understand, accept others that we do not understand. The ideas of simple human wisdom have no value before God, especially if they are bloated with pride and self-sufficiency.



The foreign languages that Fr. Luis taught the girls from his grave show the universal significance of the events.

At times I have asked myself whether these foreign tongues in Garabandal might not be connected with the universal dimensions of its mystery. Today less than ever would the Virgin limit her action to local and national boundaries. Around her are heard many languages because she has come for all, for those that are distant as well as those that are near.

I cannot cease being filled with joy that in these visits of the Celestial Mother the words of the Ave María, the foremost Marian prayer, were pronounced in Greek. Was not this the language in which it was originally written? Was it not from this language that the prayer was translated to all the others? And the Greek language, the language of the first ecumenical church, continues to be the symbol of an important part of Christians of today, who ought to join with us in the same communion of faith and love.

The Virgin is coming to us—through Garabandal—in a great ecumenical hour. Perhaps these foreign languages, besides their value as an inexplicable wonder on the lips of young uneducated children, could indicate the mysterious scope of this new and most singular Epiphany of the Virgin.

* * * * *

The connection of the departed Father Luis with the phenomenon of Garabandal did not end in the days of August, and there are many witnesses of the girls to verify this.

Besides the most amazing thing was what Conchita wrote Father Ramón in a letter on the second of August, 1964: (*partial copy of letter on next column*)

«On July 18th (the village feastday of San Sebastián de Garabandal) I had a locution,⁽³⁶⁾ and in this locution, I was told that on the day after the miracle your brother will be taken out of his tomb and his body will be found *INCORRUPT*.»

36. Locutions are one of the phenomena of mysterious communication between God and the soul that are studied in Mystical Theology.

Through a *locution*, the soul receives interiorly what God wishes to tell it—without words, but with complete clarity and certainty.



In 1976 the rumor was spread that the remains of Fr. Luis had been disinterred together with the many other Jesuits buried at Oña in the years that the Jesuit seminary had been there — it has recently been relocated — and that the caskets had been opened. It was reported that, "all the bodies were decomposed." This information was immediately used as a new *proof* against the authenticity of the apparitions to discourage many of the Garabandal devotées and rejoice their enemies.

And now we continue to hope . . . for certainly a proper explanation will come with time. It appears that this is a failure of one of Conchita's prophecies. It would be good therefore to carefully question her concerning this *prophecy*, for some small detail that might bring great light on this matter. But this *failure* of a prophecy does not destroy—far from that—the overwhelming mass of evidence that shows decisively that in few other places has the admirable *Hand of God* acted as at Garabandal.

As can be seen, the first death of Garabandal was permanently connected to the unfolding of its great mystery.

And we must thank the Lord that He has shown us a new assurance of our fundamental Christian belief that there is

a new horizon beyond
the last twilight.



**“On the day after the miracle your brother will be taken out of his tomb,
and his body will be found *INCORRUPT*.”**

Publishers Comment

Fr. Luis’ tomb has been opened and his supposed remains transferred to Loyola. Those who believe Mary’s words will await the day after the Miracle at Garabandal when a tomb will be found and opened to reveal Fr. Luis’ incorrupt body.