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# The Unsearchable Ways of God

**F**or more than a year, on the high mountain at Garabandal, strange and incomprehensible affairs were transpiring . . . disturbing to the **wise and prudent**. (Luke 10:21)

They could not understand the purpose of this.

They could not understand why this was taking place there.

If God wanted to communicate something, He could do it in a more direct and simple manner, without such a barrage of strange affairs.

And He could do it soon.

The hope and expectation were taking too long. And there were reasons for not accepting as *coming from God — Who is the Light* — this melange of phenomena that even after such a long time was not clear as to its plan or purpose.

Things of God — think the learned — necessarily have to be more intelligible. *They* walk on the terrain of reason. But for the learned and unlearned alike, this proclamation from God was written in the Old Testament centuries ago:

**My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
Nor your ways My ways, says the Lord.  
For as the heavens are exalted above the earth,  
So are My ways exalted above your ways,  
And My thoughts above your thoughts.** (Is. 55:8-9)

And with the coming of the Word into the world, the situation did not change. In the middle of the New Testament stands this formidable statement from the greatest preacher of the Gospel:

**Oh, the depth of the riches  
Of the wisdom and the knowledge of God!  
How incomprehensible are His judgments,  
And how unsearchable His ways.** (Rom.11:33)

Today it is often said that the important thing is the Bible; that is everything.

All right, but is the Bible a series of lessons logically co-ordinated, perfectly explained, and easily intelligible? If there are broad ways, they are those of the Bible, that is to say, the ways of the History of Salvation.

If there are ways of confusion, they are those of God in the courses of that History.

In attempting to explain to people what the Bible was, a scriptural scholar wrote in a popular review:

“Open the Holy Book, what do we find there? Many think they will find sublime ideas and marvelous theories concerning God, man, and the world. What a disillusion! Next to exciting stories, we find others very trivial, harsh, and unacceptable to our mentality.

All these texts confuse us. Why? Because of the inaccurate idea of God’s revelation to us. We imagine God as a type of theology professor, as a preacher who *speaks well and says elegant things*.

God reveals Himself to us, coming down to meet us, walking with us, adapting himself to our steps — even our stumblings, falls, ignorance. Jesus spoke to His disciples of **things that you cannot understand now; the Spirit of Truth will give you the understanding of everything later**.

These words express better than any theory the pedagogy always used by God in His revelation. He knows that it is not possible to give everything in the first lesson. Such love! He adapts Himself to us. When we were children, He spoke to us as children. That is to say, He limited Himself to being at our side, without our even noticing Him. And He does not hurry to take away our stubbornness. The Bible is the history of the perennial association and conversation between God and man.”

(*El Santo* — January, 1972)

It seems to me that it is not difficult to understand the Virgin’s association and conversation with us — through the girls — which has been the basis of the amazing story of Garabandal.

## **Mysterious Monotony**

During the whole month of August, 1962, the second August at Garabandal during the apparitions, the marvelous and upsetting *monotony* continued.

The *monotony* consisted in what was occurring there, what had never occurred anywhere else:

ecstasies, prayers, inimitable songs, walks of an astounding grace and agility<sup>(1)</sup> to the Pines, to the graveyard, through the streets of the village, around the church . . .

Fr. Valentín's notes and other people's reports narrate essentially the same thing through the month of August. But from time to time came forth an interesting and revealing point. For example:

«August 18th. During an apparition on that day, Saturday, Conchita said to the Virgin, *You pray very much! To Whom do you pray? . . . To Jesus? You pray to Him? . . . Even though He is your Son! Why? . . . Who is God?*<sup>(2)</sup> . . . *Oh! Only one God.*

She said too: *Why don't you let Mari Cruz see you? See how sad she is! Be with me half the time and with Mari Cruz the other half.*»



“To Whom do you pray?”

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1. There are numerous testimonies about the amazing mobility during the ecstatic marches. José Luis González Quevedo, born in Santander and for many years a resident of New York, went several times to see the ecstasies during the first summer of the events in 1961. He was so impressed that he cannot forget what he experienced there in spite of the long time that has since passed.

On one afternoon he was accompanying Conchita in ecstasy. Suddenly the girl rushed forward like a flash in the direction that would have taken her straight to a crash against a wall he saw in the background. This man, who was then young and athletic, raced after her to catch her and stop her in time; but he could not reach her, nor was his intervention necessary. He told me:

«When there were only a few centimeters left before smashing and hurting herself against the wall, the girl, who couldn't see ahead of her because of the position of her head, stopped abruptly, unexplainably. And I arrived in time to see her smiling broadly with a marvelous expression . . . It was something that I could never forget.»

But I do not want to pass over a letter that Maximina González wrote to Dr. Ortiz on the following Sunday, which is dated simply *August, 1962*:<sup>(3)</sup>

« . . . I didn't hear it personally, but some of those who were there heard it, among them a priest. And it was on one of those nights that Conchita came to my home, where I was lodging some people from Catalana.<sup>(4)</sup> My children were sleeping on a mattress laid on the floor, and I had put chairs around it so that no one would see them like this. Conchita came in ecstasy and went into the downstairs rooms and made the sign of the cross over the beds. And then she went where some children of the people from Catalana were sleeping and she gave them the crucifix to kiss.

Then Conchita left; but she stopped on the stairway and said a few things. And later she let out a laugh and turned around and went straight toward where I had hidden my children. (I was perspiring with dread that they would be seen on the floor like that.) She made her way through the chairs and fell on her knees next to the children. She spoke for a while and at that time she was heard to say, *Oh! So he is going to be a priest?*

And she gave the cross to both of them, but to the little boy she made a cross at his feet — only the little boy.

I mentioned this yesterday, Saturday, to a missionary priest from Bilbao who was in my home for a while. And he told me that the cross that Conchita made at the feet of the little boy

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2. We have another *response* here in anticipation of the deviations and errors that were then secretly developing with regard to the Faith, and which only after the Council would come into the open concerning a dogma so fundamental to Christianity as the Divinity of Christ. The Holy See finally had to intervene—perhaps somewhat too late—with a document from the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, published in March of 1972.

As in so many other matters, also in regard to the Divinity of Christ, the *new theologies* of today have succeeded in repopularizing the old heresies.

3. By one of Maximina's letters to the Pifarrés in Barcelona, we can situate the date since it is dated «*Monday, August 20*», and begins like this: «*Asunción, if you could have seen what happened last night!*»

4. Maximina used to provide lodging in her home for the visitors to Garabandal. This time she over-committed herself to such a point that there were no beds left for her own daughter and son to sleep in.

was something very mysterious . . .<sup>(5)</sup> I don't know how he explained it to me, but I'm very happy. Fr. Luis Retenaga prayed for the child and blessed him many times; and it could be that the Virgin heard him, since my son from his youth has been saying that he wants to be a priest. May God will it! May he be a good one.<sup>(6)</sup>

Today, Sunday, Conchita and Loli fell into ecstasy on going out from the rosary, which was at night<sup>(7)</sup> They walked like this for some time. Jacinta and Mari Cruz walked by themselves since they went into ecstasy a little later. And afterwards the four joined together, went up together to the Pines, and came down backwards. If you could have seen how they descended through the worst paths! It was very dark. Everyone was coming down with great difficulty, while they came down without stumbling. They walked through the entire village backwards, praying two rosaries. It lasted a long time. Last night Mari Cruz' ecstasy lasted a very long time; they said about two and a half hours.»

We have some brief notes from Fr. Valentin that complement those of Luis Navas and Maximina González, helping us to re-create better in our minds the atmosphere at Garabandal during the

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5. I do not understand the explanation of the missionary father (who surely was the *Claretian* that Father Valentin mentions in his notes, since those of the congregation founded by St. Anthony Claret are officially called *Missionary Sons of the Heart of Mary*). But it well might be related to the ancient words of Isaiah (52:7), repeated later by Nahum (2:1), and finally applied by St. Paul (Romans 10:15) to the Church and the preachers of the Gospel, to the traveling missionaries: **How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things.**

6. This desire of a good Christian mother like Maximina is understandable; and also her concern for his *being good*, for there is nothing more lamentable than a priest unfaithful to his calling.

The boy to whom this refers, Pepe Luis, after starting his studies at the seminary near to Fr. Retenaga in Rentería (Guipuzcoa), continued for some years at Comillas (Santander).

After this, prior to being ordained, he did leave the seminary. During his first Christmas vacation in 1964, his cousin Conchita wrote him a beautiful prayer entitled *The Prayer of a Young Seminarian*. The students in our seminaries today could be inspired by the letter and the spirit of this prayer.

7. Normally the rosary was said on Sundays at an hour different from the weekdays, when it was recited at night-fall after the people had returned from work. On Sundays it was said at 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Maximina notes this; and she should know, since she was the one who ordinarily led it.

early part of August, 1962:

«August 22nd. The four fell into ecstasy; first Loli and Conchita; afterwards, Jacinta; and finally, Mari Cruz. The latter, on coming down from the Pines, went to the house of Daniela (who was in bed, with her leg in bad condition, impossible for her to walk). And she gave the crucifix to her to kiss. Daniela jumped from the bed and said that she was cured. I think that there was some suggestion, but she jumped up and went up the stairs as if she had nothing wrong. We will see what happens tomorrow.»

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Fr. Valentín did not hide his disbelief that this was really a miraculous cure. However Fr. de la Riva added to the words of the Garabandal pastor some words of his own:

«I was at the village, and I heard the joyful shouts of the people who had seen what had happened, and were discussing it as if it were a miracle. I was able to see later that there was no natural explanation for what happened. Daniela went to have an X-ray taken of herself and a complete cure was reported. She is now married and has children, which wouldn't have been possible with the disease she had in her hip.»

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As the month was about to end, on Wednesday, August 29th, something occurred that seems very important, although Fr. Valentín dispatches it in a few words:

«Loli had an apparition in her home at 5:30. She gave the articles to the Vision to be kissed. An Anglican woman was very much moved.<sup>(8)</sup> She wanted to be baptized.»<sup>(9)</sup>

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The visitors at Garabandal were numerous during the month of August, since it is a vacation month and the Santander area is a traditional resort area during the summertime.

We know from Fr. Valentín, for example, that on August 8th, besides the two priests from San

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8. The Anglican Church originated in the 16th century during the rise of Protestantism when Henry VIII, king of England, broke away from the Papacy in Rome. The Anglican Church was imposed with force as the official religion, and although it had its hierarchy and *ecclesiastical* organization, it recognized the king as its supreme head.

9. Meaning with the Catholic rite, since it is supposed that she had already been baptized in the Anglican Church.

Sebastián previously mentioned, there were many people from Asturias in the village. On the 12th there were two Monsignors from Oviedo: Monsignor Novalin and Monsignor Rafael Somohano. On the 15th, feast of the Assumption, an Augustinian and a Franciscan priest and two nuns were there; on the 16th, three priests from Palencia; on the 17th, 200 visitors, among whom were the son of Carrero Blanco (the Spanish Vice-president), and another son of the mayor of Madrid, Count Santa Marta de Babío, two religious brothers of Martín Artajo, Mr. Alberto, secretary of the Attorney General and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Mr. Javier, who held a high position in the prestigious *Editorial Católica*.

Among the many qualified visitors in Garabandal during those days, we have to single out the pastor from Barro, Fr. de la Riva. His stay was a long one and he sought to use all his time to the maximum. A page from his *Memorias* tells us his experiences during those days:

«I went down every day to Cossío to celebrate the Mass.<sup>(10)</sup> Then I would go back up to the village again and ask where I could find the young seer that I wanted to see. Then I took the road leading to the pasture where she was working.<sup>(11)</sup> In the evening I returned to the village.

At nightfall there was the rosary in the church, then the apparitions, frequently very lengthy. All this greatly exhausted me.»

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This exhaustion that was wearing him down led him one afternoon, perhaps on August 11th,<sup>(12)</sup> Saturday, to refrain from accompanying the visionaries in their ecstatic marches. On going outside after the rosary, instead of following Jacinta who was marching at the time through the village in a trance, he accompanied the girl's mother to her home and there began to eat dinner. After dinner, with its anecdotes of the apparitions, Fr. de la Riva went to Maximina's home where he was lodging and went to bed.

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10. In order to dissuade priests from going to Garabandal, they were not permitted to celebrate Mass in the village church; and we know how difficult was the road to Cossío.

11. These stables were generally a long way from the village and reached by steep and difficult trails.

12. I name this date since according to the notes of Fr. Valentín there were three seminarians in the village on this day. Fr. de la Riva, who gives no date in his report says nevertheless: «I asked a seminarian from Balboa . . .»

«I was a little sad» — he said — «for not having gone to the apparitions that day like the other villagers and the visitors . . . In a brief prayer before going to bed, I asked the Virgin to give me a sign that she wasn't angry with me for not going to the apparitions after the rosary. And I fell asleep like a log.

After several hours, I heard someone running and the voice of Nandín (*Fernando, Loli's brother*) saying, *Maximina, open up! Loli is here*. I turned on the light, looked at my watch, and saw that it was a quarter to four in the morning. I said to myself, *It has to be almost an hour that Loli is in ecstasy*.<sup>(13)</sup>

In the meantime, people were knocking at the door of my room. I sat up quickly on the bed and said, *Come in*. The door opened with a bang and Loli appeared in ecstasy. She fell on her knees and began to crawl on them, little by little, toward the wall that was facing me. This made me greatly wonder since I still didn't know that, when the girls visited the homes in ecstasy, almost the first thing that they did was to pray for the departed from the family. On the wall in front of me was a large photograph of Maximina and her husband, who had been dead for years. Kneeling under the photograph, Loli prayed for some time.

Then she pivoted and on her knees and went toward my bed. With the crucifix that she held in her hand, she first made the sign of the cross over the pillow, and then she put it on my lips while smiling. She continued smiling, turned around and began to make her way toward the door, still on her knees. When she came to the doorway, she stood up and went out that way.

Then I said to myself, *The Virgin is in the village . . . and you are still in bed!*. I dressed quickly and ran toward the church. On passing by Loli's house, I noticed that the girl was in the kitchen still in ecstasy.»

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Naturally Fr. de la Riva went inside, and soon became aware that the girl was then speaking about what had happened in Maximina's house.

After the ecstasy, there were two questions: the

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13. The seminarian told Father de la Riva that Loli had predicted an apparition for 3 o'clock.



**“Loli appeared in ecstasy.”**

first, to find out why the trance had begun much later than the hour predicted (which had been at 3:00 a.m.); and the second, to explain the reason why Loli went unexpectedly to Maximina's house.

Loli answered the first question by saying that *«The Virgin wanted to show her displeasure this way»*, because on that night some women had joked about the apparitions. They had asked the girl if the Virgin painted her nails, if she combed her hair, if she wore a bracelet . . .

No one could answer the second question adequately. Ceferino could only say that his daughter, without his understanding the reason, *«immediately on being in ecstasy, at about 3:45 in the morning, had gone running toward Maximina's house.»*

*«Then I was aware»* — declared Fr. de la Riva — *«that the Virgin had deigned to hear my petition, giving me the sign that I had requested.»*

And the proof was not for his benefit alone.

## The Eucharist in the Forefront

It is unquestionable that if Garabandal began as a spectacular *Marian Epiphany*, it soon revealed itself also as an attempt to promote Eucharistic devotion. And in this regard, it can be recognized that it was coming just at the right time, since surrounding the *Mysterium Fidei*, the Eucharist, there was then beginning to emerge the enormous crisis of doctrine and devotion that is so well known to everyone today.

This Eucharistic dimension of Garabandal had a special importance during the second year, 1962, as the reader may have noticed.

Among the many episodes that took place almost monotonously in the mystery of Garabandal during the month of August, there was a *Mystical Communion* on Monday, August 6th. This was not the only day for these Communions. From Fr. Valentín's notes, we know about other days in August on which they took place. Furthermore, the priest's

notes on August 2nd specifically state: *«Conchita says that from the 18th of July, whenever there isn't a Mass; and Loli too»*. This sentence cannot be interpreted in any other way than that Conchita and Loli ordinarily were receiving Communion from the hands of the Angel whenever they were not receiving it from the hands of a priest. If such Communions passed unnoticed many times in the village, it was due to the time and place in which they occurred.

Before returning to August 6th, let us see what happened on the previous day, Sunday, that Fr. Valentín described in his notes:

*«Today Conchita came to Mass after the Sanctus and came up then to receive Communion. Since she had missed the Mass and it was a day of obligation, I didn't give her Communion. I did the same with a man from Cataluña and two seminarians; but I finally gave Communion to the seminarians, since they told me that they were going to hear Mass in the evening.»*

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What could be thought of the pastor's attitude? He is correct, provided that Conchita was culpable of being late — something which Fr. Valentín had no way of knowing — or if it was something habitual with her. And was this the case? I do not know; but I have an article written by Mr. González-Gay of Santander:<sup>(14)</sup>

*«On the previous night the girls had been in ecstasy for a long time, causing them to retire very late for sleep. (Father Valentín himself corroborates this, noting: «At four in the morning Conchita and Loli had an apparition; it lasted 45 minutes.») The pastor rang the bell at eight o'clock. Conchita and her mother, who didn't hear the bell, came into the church when the Mass was already past the Offertory. At the proper time, Conchita went with the other people to receive communion, kneeling down at the Communion rail. But Father Valentín skipped over her twice while distributing the Sacred Host. He didn't want to give her Communion since he had seen that she had come late for Mass. Two big tears rolled out from the girl's eyes, and she returned to her place. The holy Mass ended, and going outside, she ran from the church in the direction of the Pines . . .»*

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14. In a short series of articles entitled *What hasn't been written about Garabandal* that appeared in the weekly *Qué Pasa* (Madrid) during 1968.

This was the incident of Sunday, August 5th; but the episode that really interests us pertains to the following day, Monday, Father Valentín starts his brief annotation like this:

«August 6th. Today I said Mass at nine in the morning. Loli and Jacinta received Communion. Conchita was not at Mass, but at 11:30 she went to the Pines<sup>(15)</sup> where there were three brothers of St. John of God.»<sup>(16)</sup>

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Since a report was made by these three brothers let us examine it:

«Arriving from various areas, we had joined some other Brothers in our house at Celorio (Asturias),<sup>(17)</sup> to make the Spiritual Exercises which were to begin in the afternoon or evening on Monday, the 6th of August. During supper on Sunday, August 5th, four of us brothers decided to go up to San Sebastián de Garabandal. When the hour to leave arrived on August 6th, Brother Juan Bosco called the other three. One of them came to the door and said, *I'm not going. I'm backing out.*<sup>(18)</sup>

The three of us left for Llanes at once . . . We arrived at Cossío about 9:00 in the morning. From there six kilometers of very bad road

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15. Fr. Valentín's note seems inaccurate. But it should not be judged too quickly. I found this in a letter from Maximina to the Pifarré family, dated August 7:

«The pastor said that on Monday the Mass would be at 11:00. Afterwards it was changed and he came to say it at 9:00. We didn't know it, and since the bells aren't heard well here, we missed the Mass; and the pastor doesn't like to give Communion if it is not during the Mass.»

16. Although St. John of God was born in Portugal, it was in Granada that he became known for his heroic charity toward the sick especially the mentally ill. Here began the Order of Hospitalers, so blessed and specialized in the care of the mentally ill, crippled, and retarded children.

The brothers mentioned in this episode were, according to their religious names: Brother Luis Gonzaga, Brother Juan Bosco, and Brother Miguel of the Saints.

17. Celorio is a beautiful little coastal village in the district of Llanes. It had a famous seashore monastery from which there still remains a church (now the parochial church) and also some buildings which have been used for years as a retreat house. Not far from the retreat house is the property belonging to the Brothers of St. John of God.

Celorio is the neighboring parish to Barro, the parish of Fr. José Ramón García de la Riva.

18. A small piece of information which everyone can interpret as he wishes: a few years later, the same one who *backed out* of his promise to go to Garabandal, also *backed out* of his religious promises, leaving the order.

separated us from San Sebastián de Garabandal. We began inquiring about a way to go up as quickly as possible. And a storekeeper advised us that Fidelín, a young taxi driver, would be arriving sooner or later with a group of people who were coming down from San Sebastián de Garabandal. Soon we saw them. There was a psychiatrist from Barcelona with his family, who spoke favorably about the phenomena.

We came into San Sebastián de Garabandal about 10:15. The Taxi stopped near the house of Mari Cruz, one of the visionaries. She was on her balcony with her older sister. We indicated that we wanted to speak with her. And after a while, at the suggestion of her sister, she came down toward us. She greeted us timidly, and immediately we began our questions . . .



Mari Cruz on her balcony

At the end of about ten minutes, Jacinta came out on the street. She greeted us with an angelical smile. And we began to besiege her with questions too. We took several photographs of the girls, and then some men from Andalucía arrived and joined the conversation. Without our noticing it, the girls withdrew.

The men from Andalucía insistently urged us to stay for the night, since that was the time for the apparitions. We didn't know what to do. And seeing the perplexity we had because of our lack of permission and the requirements of our schedule (that same night we had to begin our retreat), the taxi driver voluntarily offered to take us to Celorio in his taxi. Everything having been arranged like this, we set out to go up the hill where the apparitions took place.



But prior to this a priest appeared, a native of Beasaían (Guipúzcoa), who was spending several days in San Sebastián de Garabandal. This priest, according to what people from Andalucía informed us, had been the object of a grace from the Most Holy Virgin through the mediation of Conchita (one of the visionaries). We greeted him and suggested that he tell us what had happened to him on the previous night. His answer was: *Come and see*. He was very excited and he left.<sup>(19)</sup>

Finally, we went up to the Pines. It is a pleasant place. Once there, we quietly began to eat some sandwiches.

Just after eating, a girl about 14 years of age appeared, accompanied by three other little girls of approximately 2, 5, and 6 years of age. We asked her if she was Conchita, and with total simplicity and frankness she answered: *Yes*. Surprised and happy, we began to accost her with one question after another.

It occurred to us to offer her one of our sandwiches, and what was our surprise on hearing her answer:

— *No, since I have to receive Communion here.*

We were perplexed and intrigued. We asked her how that was going to be. She answered with the same naturalness as at the beginning:

— *Because the Angel is going to give me Communion, since I couldn't receive it in the parish church.*<sup>(20)</sup>

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19. This is what happened to that priest, according to a letter from Maximina to the Pifarré family of the 7th:

«This Sunday (August 5th) there were also some priests here from San Sebastián. And one, by his appearance, was rather sick. And it seemed that he was going to go to Germany since it is said that there is a great shortage of priests there (for the Spanish immigrants). And Conchita said in ecstasy: *The Virgin told me that you will be cured*. This priest was greatly moved. After the ecstasy she repeated this again, that the place didn't matter, that wherever he was, there would be many souls to save.»

20. I think that Conchita's words are a good answer to the surprise that Father Valentín mentions in his notes on Monday, August 6th, 1962:

«I don't understand this: the girl has always said that the Angel only gives Communion when there isn't a priest in the village.» (He had been there and celebrated Mass at 9

Between doubt and joy — since perhaps we were going to be witnesses of something supernatural — we asked her if she was sure that the Angel was going to come, since we were there. And she answered with an awesome sureness:

— *Yes.*

After that, we continued to harass her with questions related, as would be expected, to her visions and the things that had happened to her. And she answered everything with such simplicity that we were amazed, since she spoke of events that were truly extraordinary. The conversation lasted about an hour and a half.

She told us many things, among them that

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in the morning, a Mass at which Conchita did not attend.)

It seems obvious that if the Angel came to give Communion as a substitute for the priest, he could do it not only when there was no priest in the village; but also when there was one of the visionaries who through no fault of their own could not come to the church to utilize the priest's services. We have information from the pastor from Barro, who was present, about what happened on this day:

«The pastor, Fr. Valentín, had authorized the abbot Retenaga and also another priest and myself to celebrate Mass in the village church on condition that the doors would be closed. The abbot Retenaga celebrated the first Mass; I celebrated the second; then I served the Mass of my colleague. It occurred to me to ask the Virgin for the grace that Conchita could receive Communion on that day. And if we weren't able to give her Communion ourselves, I added to myself, *that the Angel would bring it to her*. The girls had a real desire of receiving Communion; but due to their occupations, they couldn't always receive it.

I then noticed that there were some people talking outside the church. Their number increased. They tried to get in, but finding the door closed, they stayed where they were, talking under the roof overhang.»

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Under such conditions, how could he get out of the church to advise Conchita? Father José Ramón mentions how he arranged to leave furtively and run to Conchita's house. Continuing his report:

«I arrived while her mother was cooking the hot food that Conchita had to bring to her brothers in the mountains for their lunch. I asked to see Conchita and her mother answered in a sharp tone:

—*You priests, you are going to spoil my daughter. Look, I don't know how long she has been at the Pines with some priests, when she ought to be on the road taking lunch to her brothers. By now they should be really hungry.*

—I want to tell Conchita that if she wishes to receive Communion, she can do it now . . .

—*Receive Communion, receive Communion! Duty before devotion! One thing above all. She should already be over there with her brothers!*»



“Joining her hands in the position for receiving Communion, she went into ecstasy.”

she had written to several people, by order of the Most Holy Virgin, without ever having seen or known them. She told us that she had spoken with a dead Jesuit priest in four languages: German, French, English and Greek. (This priest died on the day after he had a vision of the Most Holy Virgin). She told us how the Virgin had kissed them, how she indicated at times if a word had a “b” or a “v”.<sup>(21)</sup>

We shot some photographs of her and the three girls that she had brought along. Afterwards came a few seconds of silence, and we saw that she was walking toward the place where the Angel was accustomed to appear. We noticed her going away, and one of us exclaimed, *Look! She's leaving*. She heard this.

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21. Spoken Spanish makes no distinction between a ‘b’ and a ‘v’, pronouncing them both like a ‘b’.

She looked at us with a pleasant smile. And taking a few more steps, she fell on her knees, turning her head backwards, forming an angle — it seemed to us — of about 60 degrees. And joining her hands in the position for receiving Communion, she went into ecstasy.

Facing this scene, two of us automatically fell on our knees, one at the side of Conchita, and the other about three steps in front of her. The third, who was carrying a camera, used it to take snapshots. The one at her side got up to observe her expression, her eyes, mouth, gestures, etc. We saw that once on her knees and in the position described, she made the sign of the cross in a very slow and devout way, as she whispered some words and struck her chest three times. This finished, she opened her mouth and with devotion held out her tongue in the customary way of receiving Communion.

And later, as she slowly closed her mouth, those at her side heard a noise as if something was passing down her throat.

She remained a few seconds in the same position as at the beginning and whispered something that we didn't understand. During this, she turned around on her knees, and still keeping the same position, turned toward Brother Luis. Somewhat frightened, he drew back from her, but seeing that the girl followed him on her knees, he stopped.

Then the girl took his scapular in her hands, stood on her feet, and lifting it up in a most solemn way, made as though to present it to



someone. Lowering the scapular, she fell on her knees again, and still in the same position, was motionless for a few seconds. A little later she went toward Brother Miguel, also on her knees, and repeated the same performance as before. Going on, she went to Brother Juan Bosco. But before the girl took Brother Juan Bosco's scapular, Brother Miguel tied them both together — his and Brother Juan's. However, the girl, still looking upwards, separated them, and taking Brother Juan Bosco's scapular, did the same as with the previous ones.

The whole performance finished, the girl knelt down again at the place where she had

begun the ecstasy. She stayed there for a few seconds, whispering words that we weren't able to hear. She made the sign of the cross, and got up on her feet very naturally. And in the normal state, she smiled at us, put back a ribbon that had fallen from her hair as a consequence of the ecstatic position and . . .



“whispering words that we weren't able to hear”

We began immediately to question her:

— *You have received Communion?*

— Yes.

— *Why did you take our scapulars and lift them up?*

— The Angel asked me to do it so that he could kiss them.

— *Did you speak with the Angel?*

— Yes.

**“Loli receives Mystical Communion.”**



— *What did he tell you? Did he tell you anything about us?*

— The Angel knows that you are here. And he told me that he had brought me here because of you. And he also told me that the Lord and the Virgin were pleased with you.

— *Did he tell you something for any of us?*

— Yes. He gave me a message for each of you.

— *Then tell it to us.*

— No, I have to tell it first to the Virgin, because the Angel told me to tell it to the Virgin before you.

— *Then you will tell us?*

— Yes, yes.

— *And the first of the scapulars that you held up — do you know whom it belonged to?*

— The first belonged to Brother Luis.

— *And the second?*

— To Brother Miguel.

— *And the third?*

— To Brother Juan.

She said this thinking a little beforehand, as if trying to remember. We were aware that we had told her our names rapidly before the ecstasy. On asking her which Angel usually gave her Communion, and on hearing that it was St. Michael, we took advantage of this to point out Brother Miguel's name, and right afterwards our other two names, so that she could pray for us.

— *What did the Angel look like?*

— He had a blue cloak, pink wings and slightly long hair with the ends curled up. While saying this, she made a gesture with her hair, to give us a more graphic description.

During the conversation, both before and after the ecstasy, she continually called us *'Fathers'*. When the ecstasy was over, after one of the times that she called us *'Fathers'* again, we indicated that we were Brothers. On hearing this, she exclaimed, *Oh! That's the reason the Angel told me "the Brothers."* And at the time I told him that you weren't my brothers, and the Angel smiled. Now it's all clear.

We started going back toward the village. The topic of the messages came up again:

— *Is the message for us grave?*

— And what is "grave"?

— *Well, is it good or bad?*

— No, no. It's good.

— *But are you really going to tell us?*

— Yes, yes. Really.

We noticed that we hadn't given her our address. On passing down the slope situated between the Pines and the village, the girl told us, *They say that I come down backwards through here, through these stones.*

Coming to the village, we took a light lunch and returned to our residence, giving thanks to the Lord for that which filled our souls with such joy.»<sup>(22)</sup>

Conchita got back to her home with the three brothers of St. John of God (whom everyone thought were priests) at the time when her mother was speaking in the sharp way that we saw with the pastor from Barro. As soon as Conchita came up to her mother, she began to get a scolding for being late. Conchita could only answer, submissively, with her head down.

— *It was due to the Angel giving me Communion.*

— *The Angel! The Angel! Good thing it was that way. But get going, since it's time that your brothers have lunch.*

Neither ecstasies nor apparitions freed them, or any of the other inhabitants of Garabandal, from the hard work of gaining their daily bread. But that other bread should also be remembered, no less necessary, the bread which one does not gain by the sweat of one's brow.

22. The thrill of that August Monday did not easily fade from the memory of the three fortunate brothers. Even on August 12th, Brother Miguel of the Saints at the Psychiatric Institute of Mondragón wrote to Conchita like this:

«Dear Conchita,

Since so many people pass through over there, I don't know if you still remember Brother Miguel of the Saints. I am one of the three brothers of St. John of God who were there on the past August 6th, and were witnesses to the time that the Archangel St. Michael gave you Communion.

What moments were those! As time passes, I am more impressed each day by what my eyes saw . . .

Greetings to your mother. Tell her that everything that is happening with you can be from no place but heaven. Through some things that have happened, I see in a clear manner that the hand of the Most Holy Virgin is there. We await hearing from you.»

In the synagogue at Capernaum, on the day after the most spectacular of His miracles — the multiplication of the loaves of bread — Jesus was facing the multitudes of Israel, who no sooner hoped than they were disappointed:

**Amen I say to you, you seek Me, not because you have seen signs, but because you have eaten of the loaves and have been filled. Do not labor for the food that perishes, but for that which endures until life everlasting, which the Son of man will give you.**  
(John 6:26-27)

In Garabandal, with the display of Communion from the Angel's hands, God came to inculcate the same doctrine again. And a state of affairs would

develop that He would have to condemn three years later with a denunciation truly prophetic:

**The Eucharist:  
It is being given less and less importance.**

\* \* \*

The Angel at Garabandal came to tell each son of the Church what many centuries previously the Angel of Israel had said to the fleeing prophet Elias:

**Arise, eat;  
for you have a great way to go.**  
(III Kings 19: 7)

