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**“You Are in the
Last Warnings”**

The morning of Saturday, June 19th, came quickly. But the streets of the village were slow in showing activity. The waiting and the fatigue of the previous day had worn everyone out.

As the morning slipped past, a crowd of expectant people grew around Conchita's house, hoping to finally learn the message.

The young girl appeared rejuvenated. It was said that the ecstasy of the previous night had brought back all her energy and vitality. Indefatigable and patient, she attended to everyone to the best of her ability. Some wanted to say good bye to her; others, for her to write on photographs and cards, or to kiss some holy article . . . the majority were coming with questions about the message.

But they still had to hold back their impatience.

There were Masses in the parish church. Conchita went to one of them, still fasting. On her way to

and from church, she was besieged by questions.

Finally, at noon, prior to the departure of a busload of people to France, the desired proclamation was made at the door of Conchita's house.

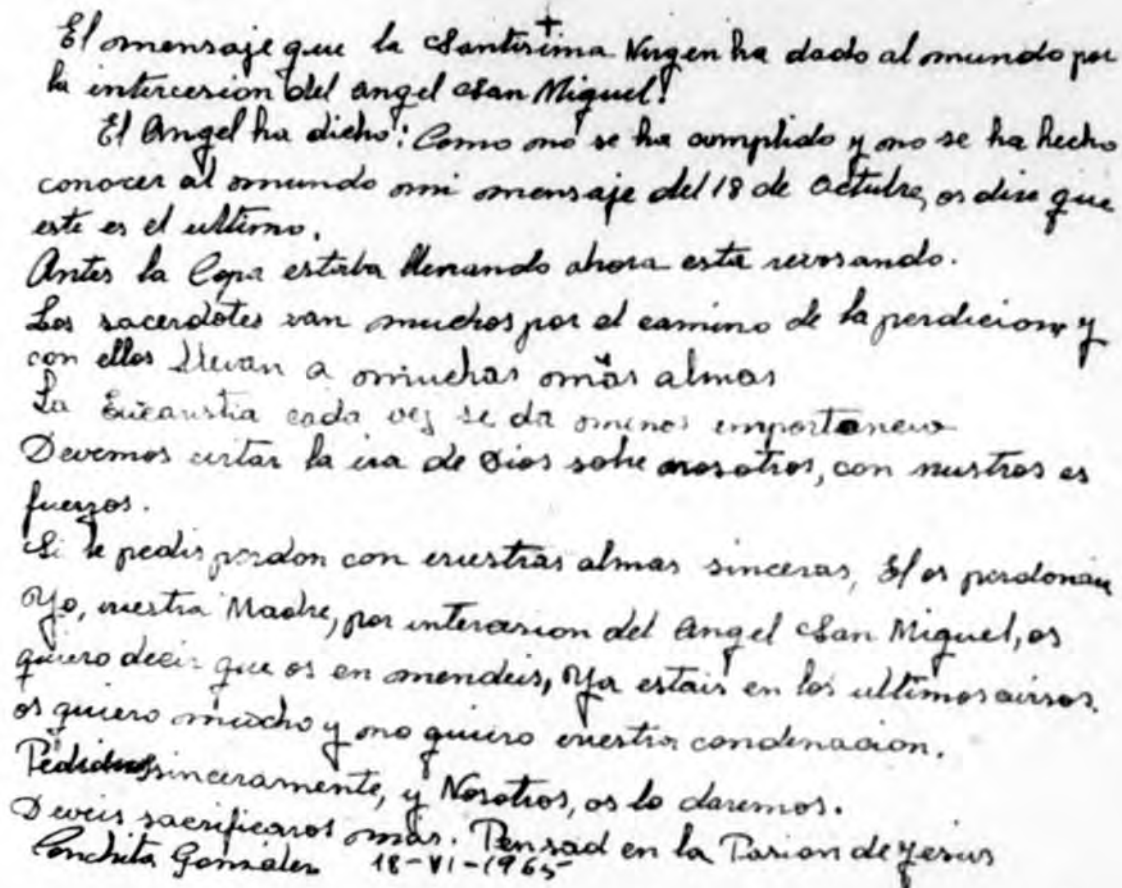
A priest read in a loud voice what Conchita had given him in her own handwriting, even with minor spelling errors and erasures.

The priest was Fr. Luis Luna from Saragossa. He has declared on repeated occasions:

«Conchita gave me the message in writing, and I read it in a loud voice in front of the doorway of her house; I kept it after that as a precious relic.»

It was first read in the original Spanish text, then in French. Another priest continued with an English translation; and apparently it was said after that in Italian too, so that the proclamation of the message left nothing to be desired.

Brief in Words, Extended in Content



El mensaje que la Santísima Virgen ha dado al mundo por la intercesión del ángel San Miguel!

El Ángel ha dicho: Como no se ha cumplido y no se ha hecho conocer al mundo mi mensaje del 18 de Octubre, os digo que este es el último.

Antes la Copa estaba llenando ahora está reborando.

Los sacerdotes van muchos por el camino de la perdición y con ellos llevan a muchas más almas.

La Eucaristía cada vez se da menos importante.

Debemos certar la vía de Dios sobre nosotros, con nuestros esfuerzos.

Si se pedis perdón con vuestras almas sinceras, El os perdonará.

Ojo, nuestra Madre, por intercesión del Ángel San Miguel, os quiero decir que os es en osendeis, y ya estais en los últimos años.

Os quiero mucho y no quiero vuestra condenación.

Pedidlos sinceramente, y Nosotros, os lo daremos.

Seis sacrificios más. Pensad en la Pasión de Jesús.

Conchita González 18-VI-(1965)

The message

The message that the Most Holy Virgin has given to the world through the intercession of St. Michael.

The Angel said:

- **As my message of October 18 has not been fulfilled, and has not been made known to the world, I tell you that this is the last.**
- **Before, the cup was filling up; now it is overflowing.**
- **The PRIESTS: Many are on the road to perdition, and with them they are taking many more souls.**
- **The EUCHARIST: It is being given less and less importance.**
- **With your own efforts, you should avoid⁽²⁾ the wrath of the Good God.**
- **If you ask pardon with a sincere heart, He will forgive you.**
- **I, your Mother, through the intercession⁽³⁾ of the Archangel St. Michael, want to tell you to amend your lives.**
- **You are in the last warnings!**
- **I love you very much, and do not want your condemnation.**
- **Ask us sincerely, and We will give you what you ask.**
- **You should sacrifice yourself more.**
- **Think of the passion of Jesus.**

1. Conchita's text is given accurately, but not as she wrote it (one statement after another, without proper separation or punctuation).

2. Almost all the copies that I have seen of the message, even Conchita's manuscripts, give this matter in the first person plural: *We should avoid . . .* This certainly is due to an assimilation on Conchita's part of the Angel's words, and should

rather say: *You should avoid . . .*

In the first writing of the message, as it appears on the photocopy, she corrected the *our efforts*, putting in *your efforts*. An unconscious echo of what she had heard came out.

3. As on other occasions, Conchita confuses *intercession* with *mediation*. Obviously, the proper thing to say here would be *by means of the Angel St. Michael*.

With this text before us, something should be said about its delivery and much more about its content.

In its delivery, it is not easy to separate the words that the Angel actually said from those that belong to Conchita's own vocabulary, which she used in communicating what she learned in the trance. Furthermore, although St. Michael gave the message, he was speaking in the name of the Most Holy Virgin. So words that he personally used (although by delegation) are merged with those that were simple repetitions of the Virgin's words. Her direct speech is especially clear in the last part of the message: «*I, your Mother . . .*»

Obviously, Conchita *put in writing only the most important part* of what she heard in the ecstasy at the Calleja. Almost 15 minutes of conversation could not be covered in half a page of written manuscript. Furthermore, some of the words that were heard during the ecstasy referred to other things than those that appeared in the message.

But looking at the content, which is what is really important, there are three elements that cannot be separated, but are easily distinguished:

- A denunciation of the terrible moral situation in the world.
- A warning of what was being prepared because of this situation.
- An exhortation to correct the situation before it becomes too late.

The Denunciation

—My message of October 18th has not been fulfilled.

—The cup . . . is overflowing.

—The **PRIESTS**: Many are on the road to perdition.

—The **EUCCHARIST**: It is being given less and less importance.

The first message of October 18th, 1961 had passed for the majority, for the vast majority, without concern or glory; that was more than obvious. Even the staunchest enthusiasts of Garabandal were disposed for seeing and experiencing more novel things, especially if they were exciting, than for carrying into practice, the admonition to *make many sacrifices, do much penance . . . visit the Blessed Sacrament . . .*

But the cup was *overflowing* because of other things too.⁽⁴⁾ The unbridled sins of men and nations—especially sins of the flesh—are so plainly patent to everyone that they need no illustrations or examples.

Almost the same could be said about the denunciation that many priests are «*on the road to perdition*», taking many souls with them. The facts are there, beyond discussion. Many have faithlessly abandoned their vows and vocations; others, it would have been better if they had abandoned them, for then they would have caused less harm to the faithful by their unorthodox doctrines concerning dogma, and their immoral opinions concerning moral law.⁽⁵⁾

Here is one of the greatest disasters that could fall upon the Church. Jesus had warned about it, **You are the salt of the earth; if the salt loses its flavor, what can it be salted with? It serves for nothing but to be cast on the ground, to be trampled on by men.** (Matt. 5:13)

But the gravest thing is that the matter is not confined entirely to priests.⁽⁶⁾

4. According to traditional symbolism, the cup represents the *tolerable* level of our sins. If the cup *overflows*, it shows that level has been surpassed.

5. I am not talking about all priests, or even the majority. Those who remain faithful deserve only praise; they do not make as much noise as the others, but they get the work done.

6. Complementing what was said about the bad state of the priesthood, it would be well to place here what Conchita wrote on July 29th, 1967 to a young French priest who asked her what the Virgin wanted from priests:

«The first thing that the Virgin wants from a priest is his own sanctification.

Fulfilling his vows for the love of God.

Leading many souls by example and prayer, for in these times it is difficult to do it any other way.

That the priest be sacrificed out of love for souls in Christ!

That at times he retire in silence to hear the God who speaks to him constantly.

That he meditate frequently on the passion of Jesus, so that his life may be more united to Christ the Priest, and thus invite souls to penance, sacrifice . . .

To speak of Mary, who is the most secure way to lead us to Christ.

And also to speak about and make people believe that if there is a heaven, there is also a hell.

I think that this is what God asks from His priests.»

During the transmission of the message, Conchita was definitely heard speaking about *bishops* too . . . and even *cardinals*! The testimonies cannot be denied. Fr. Luna was asked about his impression when —near to Conchita in ecstacy— he clearly heard her say with tremendous astonishment: *«Bishops! Bishops too? . . .»*⁽⁷⁾ Several other persons testified to the same. And under my gaze, I have a letter from the old professor of moral law at the Pontifical University in Comillas, Fr. Lucio Rodrigo, S.J.,⁽⁸⁾ written to Fr. Ramón, dated November 13th, 1965. He says in it:

«On Thursday, fifteen days ago, the pastor from Barro brought Aniceta and Conchita to me, to whom I gave communion in the infirmary chapel. We spoke for a long time together, and afterwards I spoke alone with Conchita. She confirmed to me categorically that in the June 18th message, the Angel explicitly mentioned bishops and cardinals. But influenced by truly supernatural and inspired prudence, she was silent about them (in her text of the message) since ‘they were included with the priests.’»⁽⁹⁾

Those who have studied the church and know its history will be immunized against a gasp of amazement such as Conchita had on the night of the ecstasy. They will know that bishops are the keystones in the structure of the Church; but they will also know, that besides innumerable good shepherds who fulfill their duties to God and their people, there are also hirelings, who frequently are responsible for the worst tribulations that can afflict the flock of Christ.

At Rome on December 5th, 1971, Paul VI made public an apostolic exhortation to all the bishops, on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the closing of

7. For a young girl from the mountains, as Conchita was at that time, it was almost inconceivable for even a priest to be bad— much less a bishop! For the inhabitants of the primitive villages, the faraway *Reverend Bishop* had the halo of unquestionable sanctity, far above common human frailty.

8. This saintly priest was obliged by his superiors to keep silent about Garabandal. When insistently asked, he was not reticent in revealing in private his opinion completely favorable to the *events* considered as a whole.

9. It is undeniable that the Angel said in his message that *«Many priests, many bishops and many cardinals are on the road to perdition.»* If later it was not put literally like this in the written text, it was due to Conchita believing it more prudent, given the circumstances, to ease the impact of that tremendous denunciation . . . For in considering everything, *«they were included with the priests.»*



Conchita told Fr. Rodrigo (saying Mass) about “bishops and cardinals.”

Vatican II. The pope employed a forceful and demanding tone, rather unaccustomed to him, that showed his concern that not all the bishops were fulfilling their duty:

Many of the faithful feel themselves disturbed in their faith by an accumulation of ambiguities, uncertainties, and doubts in essential matters . . . While little by little silence is covering the fundamental mysteries of Christianity, we see a tendency to construct a Christianity derived from psychological and sociological data, a Christianity separated from the uninterrupted tradition that goes back to the faith of the apostles. And we see a tendency to exalt a Christian life deprived of religious elements . . . And from our own selves, just as in the days of St. Paul, shall rise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. (Acts 20:30)

The successor of St. Peter was speaking at the time to bishops.

Closely linked with bishops and priests is the magnificent mystery of the Eucharist. What is the situation in Its regard? The message makes it clear: there is a progressive veiling, a growing lessening of Its importance. The results of this can be predicted. If the Eucharist is the mystery of the close presence of Jesus among us, the more Its existence is obscured and clouded, the less importance It will have in our lives. And so we will be drawn farther away from Him, farther away from His love, and closer to darkness.

That this was already happening in broad sectors of the Church, and was tending to spread through the entire Church, Conchita could not have known through natural means on that June 18th. The crisis of doctrine concerning the worship of the *Mysterium Fidei* that had broken out in other lands was still far from being felt in Spanish Christianity; and certainly not in those surroundings that the young girl knew.⁽¹⁰⁾

Months later appeared the first solemn and official call to attention: the encyclical of Paul VI, *given in Rome, from St. Peter's, on the feastday of Pope Pius X, September 3rd, 1965, in the third year of our pontificate*. In his encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*, the Pope stated the reasons that led him to publish it:

There are not lacking, venerable brothers, reasons for grave solicitude and anxiety. The awareness of our apostolic duty does not permit us to be silent . . . We know that among the persons who speak or write on this very holy mystery, there are those who spread opinions about the subject of private Masses, the dogma of transubstantiation and of Eucharistic devotion that trouble the

10. During the days on which the message was proclaimed from the heights of Garabandal, I arrived at a region in France where I immediately discovered things that I would not have suspected from Spain . . .

In Paris several months later, the message given in the apparitions *at the village of Garabandal in Spain* came into my hands. I was then surprised by the clearness with which it seriously pointed out the four most dangerous things that were revolutionizing the Catholic Church:

- The crisis of the priesthood
- The doctrinal and liturgical deviations concerning the Eucharist.
- The progressive loss of every notion of penitential and ascetic life.
- The setting aside of everything that required personal patience, submission, sacrifice, and humiliation for Christ.

At the time, these things could hardly have occurred to a child in Spain; and much less, to one who had no more perspective than that of a little village lost in the Cantabrian Mountains.

souls of the faithful. They cause a great confusion of ideas, touching the truths of the faith.

The encyclical did not succeed in correcting the evil. Almost three years later, on May 8th, 1968, the same Paul VI saw himself obliged to explain his proposal to assist at the International Eucharistic Congress which was going to be celebrated in Bogotá, Colombia in August:

It is not the external solemnity that draws us here, although it has its highest value . . . It is the affirmation of the Eucharistic Mystery that draws us; an affirmation that wishes to consolidate strongly and express in an unequivocal form the faith of all the Catholic Church . . . An actual confirmation of the Eucharistic doctrine in the face of the ineptitude, the ambiguity, and the errors from which a part of our generation suffer with regard to the Mystery of our altars.

What was almost unforeseeable in Garabandal in 1965 is now visible to all: the disrespect—if not outright disdain—that many priests hold for the forms of devotion that Catholic piety has built around the Eucharist through the centuries. Now comes the placing of the sanctuaries and tabernacles at the side of the churches; the arrangement of churches more as a center of reunion than as a place to meet with the Lord Jesus present among us; the tearing down of the altar rails; the Communion made carelessly and without thanksgiving; the progressive elimination of Benediction, Nocturnal Adoration, Forty Hours Devotions, and processions of the Blessed Sacrament.

As an illustration of this, in 1968 I was waiting at a train station, speaking with a man who had begun his theological studies in a diocesan seminary. We had a friendly conversation and among the things that I heard in the conversation, this stuck especially in my mind: *The other day several seminarians were talking about what each wanted to do in his church as soon as he was in charge of a parish. One of them, after saying what he thought about statues, the arrangement of altars, the placement of pulpits, etc., ended like this, "I haven't decided yet what to do with the tabernacle . . . Although perhaps, when my time comes, that won't be a problem, since it will have disappeared."* The seminarian was certainly speaking ironically, but this illustrates the truth of the statement: **The Eucharist: It is being given less and less importance.**

Warning of Disaster

—I tell you that this is the last message.

—You are in the last warnings!

I do not know if the first of these two statements should be taken in its absolute sense, or if it has only a relative meaning.

Understanding it in its absolute way, it would affirm categorically that there will be no more *communications* from heaven until the great hour comes; we are already sufficiently warned. In which case, we would have to reject as not authentic the many messages which have been proliferating during recent years in many sites of “apparitions?” by numerous “visionaries?” of all types.

But if the statement is taken in its relative sense, then it only alerts us that there will be no more messages at Garabandal.

The same could be said with regard to the second statement, that we are *in the last warnings*.

Which of the two interpretations is the correct one? I honestly do not know.

What is very definite is that Garabandal has warned us in an unequivocal way about the imminence of a very grave, decisive period that I do not hesitate to classify as *eschatological*. As we are not paying attention to this last announcement-admonition for amendment, a tremendous flood of God’s justice will inexorably fall on mankind. Moral decay and apostasy are reaching their limits.

Call to Repentance

—You should avoid the wrath of the Good God.

—I want to tell you to amend your lives.

—You should sacrifice yourself more.

—Think of the Passion of Jesus.

We provoke the wrath of God upon ourselves by our own rebellion, our own disobedience, our own self-will. All evil consists in trying to follow our own ways, instead of seeking the ways of God.

Our ways are very easy to follow; it suffices to allow ourselves to be led. But ours are ways of sin—and not only the *sin of the world* that so many new books now propose—and they lead us to destruction. On the other hand, the ways of God, how difficult they can be at times! His are the ways of triumph and salvation; but they can only be traveled through effort and sacrifice: two things that our weakened nature abhors.

The world—men prone to serve the flesh—inclines to ease and not to combat, to pleasure and not to service, to leisure and not to work, to the good life and not to good living. This manner of living—spread throughout the Church—is inflicting mortal wounds.

Pseudo-prophets, with their distorted nuances ranting about *renewal and liberation*, are attempting to discredit the ascetic and penitential way of life, as though asceticism were not an evangelical sign, but the despised remnant of a naïve and misled monastic spirituality unworthy of esteem. Self sacrifice? Self denial? Self renunciation? How absurd! Neither the clergy nor the laity want any of this. Anti-asceticism is the order of the day.

But for whom did Jesus say, *If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross?* (Mt. 16:24) Certainly this is not for those who never mention Him except to speak about self-determination, self-fulfillment, self-advancement . . .

Thus many things explain themselves. How could a person like this accept the message of June 18th that insistently requests things that they themselves are trying at all costs to renounce?

—**You should sacrifice yourself more.**

—**Think of the Passion of Jesus.**

The Passion of Jesus! They are not interested in this. They are only interested in talking of things more to the liking of the *man of today*.

For them the only things that matter are actions and words favorable to their self-expression and lifestyle, which is far removed from, **He made Himself obedient to death, the death of the cross!**⁽¹¹⁾

The Aftermath of June 18th

The huge crowd that had come to Garabandal from afar, left the village for the most part consoled and inspired. They had assisted at another manifestation from God: one more sign that we are not alone in the troubles of our world and our time. The majority of them would have endorsed the final lines with which the reporter from the *Le Monde et la Vie* concluded his article: «**Toward 4 o'clock on the afternoon of June 19th, we left the village to head for Santander, exhausted, but at the same time, fulfilled.**»

The reaction was neither as unequivocal nor as favorable among the people of the village and neighboring towns. Their attitude was reflected in the remarks they made.

Father Laffineur, perhaps fortuitously, had kept himself at a discreet distance during those eventful days. Finally, with the departure of the crowds, he was able to walk freely through the village. Soon he ran into the stonemason Pepe Díez, a witness of the first rank for many of the happenings.

11. How much some would like to efface one of the principal declarations of the Gospel: **Enter by the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many there are who enter that way. How small the gate and narrow the way that leads to life! And few there are who find it.** (Matt. 7:13-14)

—*How is it going, Pepe? What do the people say now?*

—*This time, it's for real. Everyone seems to be believing again.*

But the enthusiasm was not so general, and there were exceptions.

Dr. Ortiz' wife Paquina, and her sister, Eloísa, took advantage of their stay in the village to make several interviews with Mari Cruz' mother, Pilar. On June 18th, the night before the event, they found her upset:

Look—she said to them almost in tears—Now everyone slanders us. There are papers going around saying that we are the ones who go to church the least. What they say about me isn't important; but what they say about Mari Cruz . . . And her father . . .



Pilar, the mother of Mari Cruz

On the following afternoon, in the midst of everyone's anticipation of what was to happen, she seemed calmer and even happy.

But when the two women from Santander went to say goodbye to her on Sunday, June 20th, they found her in a very different mood.

She was writing, and on seeing them, hurriedly put the writing paper away.

—*I don't write to anyone except my sister.*

—Please continue then, we don't want to interrupt you.

—*No, you aren't interrupting me. Come in . . . Today I gave Mari Cruz a lesson. I gave her a good scolding. Because she's stupid. Since, instead of giving an explanation when they say something to her, she keeps quiet . . .*

(Then she changed the conversation). *What a stupid thing Conchita did yesterday! I could do that myself, if I wanted to . . . That's all a lie. What I should do is go tell the bishop about the whole thing.*⁽¹²⁾

—That seems good. He's the one that all of these things should be told to, not the others.

—*I would have gone already, if I had a car waiting for me, rich people in my house, and a lot of money to spend! Yes, then, I'd have the means to travel.*

—If it's for that, my car is at your service. I will take you to the bishop. Or, if you prefer, there is Plácido, who will certainly take you too.

—*Look, he's the only good person who comes here. I'm going to tell you something.* (She became agitated). *If you didn't come, and no one else came, this thing would have ended.*

—We haven't taken part in this for nothing. We have come to pray . . . And if we've spoken with the girls, we've been satisfied with whatever they wished to tell us . . .

12. Pilar was not long in finding an occasion to tell this to the bishop . . .

When many days later, on June 24th, Father Laffineur and his companions stopped in Santander to present their respects to the bishop and pass through the Commission, they learned that Mari Cruz and her mother had also been through there, and had been interviewed extensively by the canon Odriozola. He had taken them to the bishops' place . . . and in his presence, as a concrete demonstration that everything about Garabandal had been false, *Mari Cruz started herself making an "ecstasy."* The affair had to be shocking, so that after a minute the bishop interrupted the *trance*, saying with disgust: *That's enough!*

—*Listen to me. If you didn't come, they would not have a reason to do these things, and all this would have been ended. Since you want to make something out of nothing . . . My daughter is sincere and tells the truth.*

—Well, Pilar, when this began, no one came here. We didn't even know the village existed. Then why did they make this up? To fool people?

—*Oh! I don't know. But in the beginning, my daughter told the truth. I believe she now does too, since she is honest.*

—In the beginning, Mari Cruz told the truth and now does too, since she is honest. In the beginning, she said that she saw; now, she says that she never saw . . . Where is the truth?

—*I don't know. But my daughter was honest before, and is now too . . . Only if the Miracle would come!*

Many enlightening thoughts occurred to me in reading this dialogue; but I think that they would have occurred to the reader too.

It was on a group of priests near Puente Nansa that the events of June 18th had their greatest impact. Fr. Laffineur wrote about it in *L'Etoile dans la Montagne*:

«On the evening of June 18th, we were invited to a conference planned for the following day at Puente Nansa. An engineer, who represented himself as a member of the Commission of Santander, wanted a meeting attended by himself, the local priests, and us. We confided this to the pastor of Garabandal, Fr. Valentín Marichalar, who ultimately opposed it.

Perhaps we involuntarily lost a valuable occasion to inform ourselves. This engineer and the circle of listeners that we would have met were determined enemies of the apparitions. The ancient Romans were right in their maxim, *It is useful to be taught by one's enemies.*»

What was the result of this meeting at Puente Nansa? According to the author just mentioned, the meeting was initially brought to order because the priests of the area thought that the statement, **The priests: many are on the way to perdition . . .** applied to them personally. Later they broadened



“Mari Cruz told the truth.”

their interpretation, declaring heatedly that it referred to all priests; and finally they traveled to Santander to present a very irate protest to the bishop.

Actually, I do not understand such a nervous reaction on the part of those priests. Unless, in their case, they were convinced that the message had a basis . . .

The Fourth "No" from the Bishop

Perhaps the feverishly antagonistic reaction from that group of priests pushed the Commission at Santander to publish a new «Nota» on the matter of Garabandal. Bishop Beitia Aldazábal, who was no longer titular bishop of the diocese, but who continued at its head as Apostolic Administrator, honored this «Nota» with his approval and signature, although there are reasons to doubt that he personally was in full accord with what was officially declared. The «Nota» was dated July 8th, and inserted into the *Boletín Oficial del Obispado* of that month:

«Our pastoral duty obliges us to write this Nota . . .

The Bishopric of Santander has received extensive documentation during these years on everything that has happened there. It has not closed its file on this matter. It always gratefully receives all the evidence for judgment that is submitted to it.

There have been three official Notas that have appeared up to this moment, trying to orientate the judgment of the faithful. This Nota will be the fourth, and its conclusion: the same as that of the preceding Notas.

The Commission that studied the credentials of these matters has not found reasons to modify the judgment already pronounced, declaring that there is no evidence of a supernatural character in the phenomena of which it made a careful examination . . .»

As an illustration of the «*extensive documentation*»

received and of the «*careful examination*» made, we cite here an extract—up to now, never responded to by the chancery—from Fr. Laffineur in the book, *L'Etoile dans la Montagne*:

«This is the fourth anniversary of the apparitions. Yes, four years earlier, on June 18th, 1961, everything began . . .

But in four years the Commission has never had the time to bring before them either the visionaries, or their families, or even the pastor of the parish (and for our part we might add: nor any of the witnesses who might have shown themselves favorable to the supernatural character of the phenomena). Inconceivable, the French would say, and all those who know the history of Lourdes and Fatima. Yes, inconceivable, but true. More than true, unfortunately!

The Commission was content with emissaries, some of whom we know; and we know all the harm that they caused in the little village, left to itself in the middle of events that were infinitely beyond it.»

Fr. Laffineur and his French companions had a good occasion to see how the Commission of Santander carried on its work—by their personal experience on the morning of June 24th, six days after the message, during their return trip from Garabandal . . . Anyone wishing to know the remarkable and astounding experiences they had with the Commission, can read them in the *L'Etoile dans la Montagne*.⁽¹³⁾

But let us return to the bishop's «Nota».

13. On May 1st, 1969, Father Laffineur gave a conference at Lisieux, France and in it he reminisced about his meeting on June 24th with the one who had been the secretary, lawyer, judge, and everything else in the Commission:

«All my responses were interrupted beforehand, giving a feeling that there could be nothing else than what was unfavorable to Garabandal . . . And listen to this. When I had finished my statements (which took place in a restaurant! The ultimate scandal in canon matters!) he said to me, *Sign it.*

I answered, *I won't sign this thing.*

Then I saw what none of you could have imagined: with his own handwriting, at the bottom of what had been written, he calmly put my first and last name in large capitals . . . How can this be called canon law? When some of my friends from Germany passed through Santander sometime later, he assured them that I had given a deposition in front of the Commission *against Garabandal*, and that the deposition was *signed by me.*»



“We have not found any reason for ecclesiastical censure.”

«Nevertheless, we state here that we have not found any reason for ecclesiastical censure with regard to condemning either the doctrine or the spiritual recommendations that have been promulgated in this affair, in so far as they are directed to faithful Christians. Rather they contain exhortations to prayer and sacrifice, to Eucharistic devotion, to devotion to Our Lady in traditional praiseworthy forms, to the holy fear of God offended by our sins.

They simply repeat ordinary Church doctrine in these matters.

We accept the good faith and religious fervor of the people who go to San Sebastián de Garabandal, and who merit the deepest respect; and we wish to call upon that same religious fervor so that they, relying fully on the hierarchy of the Church and its magisterium, comply with the closest exactness to our repeatedly published recommendations.»

It can be assumed that these paragraphs were the *personal* part of Bishop Beitia; perhaps the sole part of the whole «Nota» that was composed by him. But there are serious indications that he, in the middle of his confusion with regard to Garabandal, personally came to be closer to its acceptance than its rejection . . . And so? Mysteries of God. Or, perhaps, simply mysteries of man.

During the days in which the fourth «Nota» was composed—the second and last «Nota» from Bishop Beitia—his bewilderment on this matter had to be increased by the abrupt change taking place in Father Luis López Retenaga.

From the end of 1962, that priest, mentioned so many times in our story, had been confronting the bishop of Santander as the most convinced and qualified defender of the authenticity of the Garabandal events. But, suddenly, inexplicably—or perhaps it was too explainable, as some might say—he made a complete about-face, changing his enthusiastic defense not just into doubt, but into an outright opinion that all *the events* could well be considered the result of diabolical intervention. Something of what happened to Father Retenaga can be read in *Star on the Mountain*: **«A priest stopped believing in Garabandal.»** (His name is not given).

Upsetting? But not too much. Garabandal was continuing to be, more and more fiercely, a **sign of contradiction**. But was that not the same thing that had been prophesied for Jesus Himself? (Luke 2:34)

Here on earth, we remain suspended between light and darkness.

Only a fool would pretend that the affairs of God have the $2+2=4$ clarity that we like to see in the affairs of men!