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Farewell in the
Rain

During the ecstasy on June 18th, among the few words that Conchita was heard to say were these: «*July 2nd . . .*»

What was predicted for this date? We do not know; or at least, I do not know.

We do know that on July 2nd, the fourth anniversary of the Virgin's first apparition, she condescended to visit the young visionary. She came by way of a *locution*.

Conchita had another locution on the 18th of the month, which was the village feastday and the third anniversary of the *Miracle of the Host*.

It might have been thought at the time that the events would hold their usual course; that everything was going to continue as before.

But the most astute observers soon could not avoid the impression that June 18th had come as a finale or end, to public manifestations at least, of all that had taken place at Garabandal.

The events would not be repeated. The seers had changed. The circumstances had changed too.

And the girls no longer had a reason to remain in the village, waiting for interventions from heaven. It was time for them to think of their futures, to try to arrange their later lives.

The most singular things that they had experienced would remain only in their memories—confused, at times—leaving them with the obligation of showing a conduct shining before God and man.

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As if his departure were also necessary for the new phase that was to be experienced by Garabandal, on August 16th Bishop Beitia left Santander forever. The feast of the assumption with its liturgical celebrations, its bouquets of flowers placed at the foot of the Virgin's statue as it is carried in front of the cathedral, was his last day in the diocese that he had headed for three years. Two days later, on August 17th, Bishop Vicente Puchol Montís was installed as his successor.

With the new bishop, many felt a great euphoria. He was young, with a late vocation,⁽¹⁾ extremely personable. Others could not avoid feeling wary

and uneasy. The Spanish Church had already begun to experience in a dramatic way the confusion of mentalities and ideologies that would burst out later in violent confrontations. Although the new bishop appeared to be opposing the *innovators*, it was said of him that he was the initiator, if not the author of the complete change — some spoke of an *actual revolution* — that was happening in the diocesan seminaries.

With regard to Garabandal, the future did not augur well with the new bishop. As soon as his nomination was known, a priest in Madrid, a former student at Comillas, notified Father Lucio Rodrigo:

«Walk cautiously. I know Vicente Puchol, and I know that he is against Garabandal. He is a declared enemy of the apparitions . . .»

* * *

Although the one thing that had nothing to do with the other, on the day after Bishop Puchol's installation, Conchita wrote to Fr. Laffineur, to communicate her *great joy*:

«My mother has allowed me to enter into the convent. For me, it is a great thing to be able to consecrate myself completely to Christ like this — from my 16th year — for the rest of my life . . . Pray for me, so that I will be able to go as soon as possible to the Missionary Sisters of the Discalced Carmelites.»

Thinking perhaps that Conchita's departure was imminent, Fr. Laffineur arranged another trip to Spain, to obtain certain clarifications from her. The meeting took place in Torrelavega (Santander) on September 8th, the feast of the Nativity of Mary.

With Fr. Laffineur were some travel companions who served as witnesses; at Conchita's side, as usual, was her mother Aniceta. Fr. Laffineur submitted 45 questions to the young girl and carefully recorded her answers. Part of these have been published in the *L'Etoile dans la Montagne*; the

1. A late vocation refers to those who did not begin study for the priesthood in early youth.

After the bloody Spanish Civil War, in the fervor of the Catholic reconstruction that followed, there were many of these late vocations. They came to be overestimated, as if from them could be expected much more than from the others. Time has gone by and in the face of the end results the special esteem for those vocations has declined.



“Her denials today are due to the mysterious work of the devil.”

rest have been reserved for the future.

These are the most interesting of the ones that have been published:

—*«Yes, I wrote the date of the Miracle to the bishop. (It seems that this letter never came into the hands of Bishop Beitia.)*

—*I had a locution on July 2nd. I already explained it to you by letter. And I had another on the 18th of the same month; I gave that in writing too.*

—*My companions and I thought about the convent from the first days of the apparitions. No priest put it into our minds.*

—*The Pope will see the Miracle, wherever he is; Padre Pio will see it too.*

—*Yes, the Council will have an extraordinary outcome.*

—*After Paul VI, there remain only two popes.*

Following that, the ‘end of times,’ which is not the same as the ‘end of the world.’ I do not understand this well, but the Virgin told it to me like this.

—*My leaving Garabandal is no obstacle to announcing the date of the Miracle. I’ll be able to tell the date to my superior, and if necessary, also to my spiritual director . . .*

—*After the miracle, a chapel will be built in honor of St. Michael the Archangel.⁽²⁾ I would prefer that it would not be done as at Lourdes, which I got to know in May of 1963; I would like it to be more simple and unadorned.*

—*The greatest danger for the village of Garabandal is pride.*

—*Mari Cruz certainly saw the Virgin. Her denials today are due to the mysterious work of the devil. After the Miracle, she will reaffirm the truth of her ecstasies.*

2. Obviously this has nothing to do with the chapel built by some people below the Pines in September of 1967.

—*The best time to go to Garabandal will be when the four of us have left the village; then it will be solely for the Virgin.*»

* * *

Two days after this meeting in Torrelavega, on September 10th, there was another meeting in Garabandal itself. It occurred under the awning of a tent that a French family had pitched a few steps from Conchita's house. Conchita went to visit a woman there with the two smallest of her eight children.

—*«You are fortunate to set up your tent here; it was right here that Mari Cruz had an apparition with the Virgin.»*⁽³⁾

—You are certainly the fortunate one in having been specially chosen by her.

—*When the Virgin appeared to me, her look didn't stay fixed on me; it roved from one side to the other, over the mountains, taking in the whole world, and her face seemed to smile at all the universe. She didn't come for me.*

—You have a large picture of the Virgin in your house. It's very beautiful. Does it resemble your vision?

—*Oh no! That's nothing. It's less than wax to the real thing. There's no way of copying the Virgin's beauty . . . You know about Fatima?*

—Only a little. I have heard talk about the miracle of the sun.

—*The miracle of Fatima is nothing in comparison with what will happen here. This will be much, much greater.*

Then the interpreter, Eloísa Deguía, whispered to the French woman: "Perhaps the Virgin herself will be seen in person." Conchita, overhearing this, replied vigorously:

—*No, no! It won't be that . . . If it were that, then it would be an apparition, not a miracle.*

Lifting up her arms and spreading them out, Conchita continued:

3. We have already spoken about this rather notable apparition in chapter VIII of Part One.



"The miracle of Fatima is nothing in comparison to what will happen here."

—*The Miracle here will be much greater, more tremendous than Fatima. It will cause such an impression that none of those who see it will be able to leave with doubts. It would be well if all the world were here, since that way there surely would be no chastisement, since everyone would believe.*

—Will all the sick who come be cured?

—*The Virgin didn't tell me "all" or "some," but: "The sick will be cured."*

The Virgin smiled, she smiled very much. She didn't inspire fear!

—Then she is very kind. Kind like a mother.

—*No, much more than a mother! She is kind like one who, besides being a mother, is a best friend, for we could tell her everything that came to our minds. And she understood us and helped us.*

She laughed and even played with us. One

“the flaming stars”





“a revelation of our sins”

day, she even handed down her crown to Loli, so that Loli could amuse herself by putting it on her head, although Loli was afraid of burning herself on the flaming stars.

With a mother one doesn't feel so free and confident as with the Most Holy Virgin. No one confesses his own faults to his mother, nor does he reveal his secret defects.»⁽⁴⁾

* * *

Four days later, on September 14th, the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, there was another meeting with new statements and clarifications about the things that had been hanging in the air at Garabandal. It was said that the young visionary, before her departure for the convent—which she thought very near—was more fluent than ever in answering the questions that interested everyone. This time, her questioners were Americans. They had given their questions in writing, and in writing Conchita gave them these answers. We have an

4. Conchita speaks from her own situation. In Aniceta she had a very strict and demanding mother, although one full of solicitude for the welfare of her daughter.

accurate copy of this, but we are only reproducing the points of major interest, because many of the others have already been sufficiently repeated:

«—The Warning, will it be a visible thing, a personal thing, or both at the same time?

—*It is something that comes directly from God, and will be visible throughout the world, in every place that exists.*

—Will it reveal his own sins to every person in the world, including persons of other religions and even atheists?

—*Yes, the Warning will be like a revelation of our sins. Believers and non-believers alike will see and experience it, whatever religion they are.*

—Will the Warning cause people to remember the dead?

—*The Warning will come to purify us for the Miracle, and it is like a catastrophe which will be felt in our conscience. It will make us remember the dead in the sense that we will*



“a tremendous terror”

prefer to be among the dead, rather than endure the Warning.⁽⁵⁾

spite of seeing the Virgin at the same time in all her beauty and indescribable goodness!



—Please tell us what you can about the Chastisement, and what will be felt when it is seen.

—The Chastisement, if we do not change, will be horrible. Loli, Jacinta and I have seen it; but I’m not able to say in what it consists, since I don’t have permission from the Virgin. When I saw it, I felt a tremendous terror, in

● That, on the contrary, she doesn’t know anything about the Miracle that Conchita is predicting because the Virgin never told her that it was going to come. Whenever she inquired about it like the other girls, the Virgin either didn’t answer or only said: *«They will believe, they will believe.»*

The little bit I was able to draw out from her about the Warning coincided with what was already known from Conchita: that it was going to be worldwide, that it would oblige us to face our consciences, that it would be terribly impressive!

More recently I have come upon proof that the Virgin told Loli about the Warning. It appears that this came very early in the *revelations* received at Garabandal, although the girls receiving them (this is my impression) were slow in understanding the importance and special characteristics of the supernatural phenomena that were predicted.

Mrs. Sagrario Aguirre from Oveido informed me by letter in 1978:

«Before the Warning was talked about, actually more than a year before Conchita predicted such a thing for the world, Loli told me one day, One night you will be struck with something tremendous. (I can’t say for sure that she said ‘night’, but I was certainly left with the impression that it would be at night.) During the night on that day, and also the following night, I couldn’t sleep, waiting in terror. . . But talking with Loli again, she told me, Do you think it’s going to be for you alone? No, it’s going to be for the whole world. And she made me keep it secret . . . And she added that, the Virgin had told this to Jacinta and her from the beginning of the apparitions.

5. For a long time Conchita was the only visionary who talked about the Warning. This had caused it to be believed that she was the only one who had received *communications* concerning this important thing. (This had led me to hold the *Warning* as having the least guarantee among the future events that were predicted at Garabandal.)

But on being able to speak with Jacinta in Santander on November 10th, 1973, I discovered that the Warning has a broader foundation. In the presence of several persons, Jacinta affirmed with complete clearness:

- That the Virgin had spoken to her too, and more than once, about the Warning that would come before the Chastisement.

- That she knows of what it consists, although she does not know the date; if she does not say anything about what it is going to be, it is because the Virgin has commanded her to keep it secret.



“Jesus will perform miracles with these articles.”

—When you prayed the rosary with Our Lady, did she teach you how to pray it?

—In the beginning, the Virgin prayed the rosary ahead of us very slowly, as she wanted us to pray it. Because of this, she herself recited the Hail Mary too, so that we would learn how.

—Is it true that the body of Fr. Luis Andreu will be disinterred on the same day as the Miracle, and will be found incorrupt?

—The Virgin told me in a locution: “The body of Fr. Luis Andreu will be found incorrupt, just as he was buried”.

(We have already described in another chapter that Conchita wrote to Fr. Ramón Andreu, assuring him that the day after the Miracle they would find the body of his brother just as it was when he was buried.)

—What value will the articles kissed by the Most Holy Virgin during the apparitions have, before and after the miracle?

—The Virgin told me: “Jesus will perform miracles with these articles. Those that wear them with faith and confidence will have their purgatory on earth.”⁽⁶⁾

(This means that they will have the suffering here that they would otherwise have to endure in the next world after their death.)

—Did the Most Holy Virgin tell you anything about the perfume of flowers that sometimes emanates from the articles kissed by her?

—No, I never heard anything about that. She did say that they will work miracles and prodigies.

—Did the Virgin teach you any songs?

6. No one can enter into heaven without being purified, or said in another way, without expiating the debt due for sin. That is the reason for purgatory. To suffer in this world for the debt that we owe for our sins is much better than to suffer in the next; since here, at the same time as *making satisfaction*, we also *obtain merit*. On the contrary, all that it is possible to do in purgatory is to make satisfaction for sins.

—No. *The Virgin helped us make up some songs.*

(By this is meant that the Virgin did not teach them in advance the verses that they sang. Rather she aided them in saying small poems at the time when they sang them. They were apparently inspired and all three were able to sing at the same time, with the same words, and with the same tune.)

—Did the Most Holy Virgin or Jesus say anything about the conversion of Russia?

—*In a locution with Jesus, the only one that I have had with Him up to the present, He told me that Russia would be converted.*

—Could you explain the ‘sign’ that will remain at the Pines after the Miracle?

—*It is a ‘sign’ that will remain forever. It will be able to be photographed, televised, seen; but it will not be able to be touched. It will be evident that it isn’t a thing of this world, but of God.*



“a sign that will remain forever”

—Many believers in Garabandal want to work for the spread of the Virgin’s messages. But they are concerned because of the obedience that they owe to their bishops . . . What do you have to say about this?

—*That’s very pleasing to the Virgin. She likes that very much. She desires us to work at spreading her message. But also she wants us to obey the Church, so as to give more glory to*



“She wants us to obey the Church.”

God. And she will give time for the message to be spread, with the permission of the Church.

* * *

With these statements, Conchita thought she was performing her last services for the cause of Our Lady of Garabandal prior to her entrance into religious life, where she would have to keep silent and remain in seclusion.

She was impatiently looking forward to this time. But at the same time it seems she felt an instinct of foreboding for the future.

Two days after the meeting with the Americans, she wrote to Fr. José Ramón de la Riva.

She deliberately used for her letter a piece of paper on which the message of June 18th was photocopied, and she wrote:

«San Sebastián de Garabandal

9-16-1965

Dear Father José Ramón,

Just a few lines to tell you that I found out that you were here a few days ago. That made me feel bad since I wanted to speak with you for a few minutes, if not longer . . .

You know that within a few weeks, or perhaps a few days, I’ll enter the convent. I want to

enter soon in order to do —or try to do— what the Virgin wants.

I don't know if I have a true vocation. I think I do, although I have some doubts. The Virgin didn't tell me to enter.»

These last lines are revealing. They show that there is something deeply troubling Conchita. She does not know God's plans for her. Up to now, during the ecstasies and locutions when she had asked personal questions about her future, she had so many times been left unanswered, or else had been answered in words that clearly evaded the question.

And the day would come on which she would clearly feel herself not chosen by Jesus to form part of what the Church considers His *spouses*. This would be for her a cause of great suffering and a perilous spiritual crisis.

But as summer ended in 1965, she was counting on leaving immediately for the convent at Pamplona to begin her religious life. The day of departure had even been set: September 29th, the feast of St. Michael, the Archangel. Could she have chosen a better date?

But that day came, and Conchita had to stay in

Garabandal while, with tearful eyes, she saw her friends and companions, Loli and Jacinta, leave for Saragossa on September 30th.

Fr. Luna had arranged everything so that the two girls could enter free of charge as boarders in the college of the Charity Sisters of St. Ann in the Aragon town of Borja.

Jacinta and Loli were 16 years old at the time, in the flush of youth. They had never lived outside of San Sebastián de Garabandal, and the parting from the village on that day, even with their eyes on the future, must have been nostalgic. While saying goodbye before leaving, Loli soaked two handkerchiefs with her tears.

Understandable sorrow! Beside the pain of separation, could it have been due also to the ending of the most unforgettable period of her life?

Perhaps she was beset also with the premonition that her way would soon turn into a most narrow and difficult one.

Almost on the night before leaving, she had a locution, and heard from the Virgin: **«Loli, if in the future I do not appear to you again, it is that your hour of suffering has come.»**



“your hour of suffering has come.”

Actually both young girls, Loli and Jacinta, suffered considerably in the school at Borja. I know this expressly from Jacinta's admission that she kept a painful remembrance of the school year there. All the blame could not be put on the religious teachers. According to Fr. Luna, the principal cause of their unfortunate troubles were certain *Garabandalistas* of the first rank, who could not resign themselves to the girls being outside of their presence and control.

Jacinta probably cried less than Loli at the time of farewell. Not because she was less sensitive, but because she had a different character, less prone for expansion.

Before Fr. Luna could arrange for her to stay at school, Jacinta was talking about entering into a convent of cloistered Carmelites. Fr. Luna himself requested her admission to the Carmelite convent at Saragossa; and the community, by a secret vote, accepted the request. Why then, didn't she go?⁽⁷⁾

Perhaps the one who was most pleased by this change was her mother, María; it seemed that she would lose her daughter much less this way. Not surprising. Nothing is more difficult than complete generosity toward God.

On that September 30th, 1965, as Jacinta and Loli went down toward Cossío, the dispersal of Garabandal began. As they turned the bend in the road to cast a last look at their village, their minds could not fathom all the things that they were leaving behind.

* * *

Still in the village, keeping her suffering to herself, was the one who had looked forward with such longing to September 29th, the day set for her leaving to be a novice in the Discalced Carmelite Missionaries: Conchita.

7. It appears that the decision that stopped Jacinta from entering into the Carmelite convent came from her father Simón. The good man was categorically opposed at the final hour, believing that it was a barbarous thing for his 16 year old daughter—who had never left her house or had the least experience with the world and life—to forever commit herself like this in something so difficult.

Actually Jacinta was not sure of her vocation. During the time of the ecstasies, whenever she had talked about, or asked about his particular thing, the Virgin had never given her a definite answer.

Her mother, who had given her consent originally, later changed her mind, refusing to allow her daughter to leave before . . . Before what?

It had been mentioned to Aniceta about the possibility and feasibility of Conchita going to Rome, to be interviewed by the highest hierarchy of the Church, and to see perhaps, if it were possible, the Holy Father himself. And Aniceta came to the conclusion that this had to be done before anything else, and the sooner the better; therefore, before the girl shut herself in the convent. In August, it had seemed a simple matter to finish the trip before the middle of September; and thinking along that line, she gave her consent to Conchita to leave for the convent on the feast of St. Michael. But complications delayed things.

Fr. Laffineur wrote:

«On September 8th at Torrelavega, Conchita announced to me her departure for the convent of the missionary sisters of the Discalced Carmelites at Pamplona. The departure should have taken place on the 29th of that month. During the same period Loli and Jacinta were to leave for the province of Saragossa to stay with the Sisters of Charity.»

Why was the end of September chosen? Because Conchita and her mother had good reason to believe that their voyage to Italy would have taken place well before the date fixed for the inauguration of the Council's last session, that is to say, before September 14th. But complications developed and after September 29th the two of them had to pass some extremely difficult months.»

Why did complications arise? Fr. Luna undertook *against wind and sea*, as a true man from Aragon, to bring Conchita to Rome, in accordance with Cardinal Ottaviani who then was still the head of the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office. But the chancery at Santander, as soon as it learned of the project, deployed all its connections in Rome and outside of Rome to crush the matter. The chancery must have been afraid of something.

Let us see how Fr. Luna himself recounts this in the introduction of a book he wrote about another site of apparitions:

«In September we got our passports in order. However . . .

Toward the end of August, I offered my services to the new Bishop of Santander, Bishop Puchol, so as to put him in direct contact with the girls. He told me that he didn't consider it necessary, or even wise, to know them.⁽⁸⁾ He assured me that he was already well informed, and he confided to me his plan: to put a young priest⁽⁹⁾ in charge of the village and "*the girls should remain there.*"

8. Why would Bishop Puchol need to know the girls and thoroughly study the matter if he were fully set on the *progressivist* theory that apparitions and revelations are superfluous for the Church?

Shortly after his «Nota» of Sunday March 18th, 1967 (which was given the maximum publicity, even television exposure), by which he thought to definitely bury Garabandal, Bishop Puchol went up to the village to see if he could effectively and smoothly liquidate it.

He was eminently educated and eloquent. It was a Sunday and the entire village attended his Mass. It was expected that his sermon would clarify the matters that were preoccupying everyone. But the bishop avoided the main subject, and all had the impression that he had limited himself to *talking about the Gospel*. Nevertheless Aniceta, who was very attentive and watchful not to miss anything, caught this, which later she confided to me as absolutely sure: The bishop at one time during his speech, lowering his voice in an off-hand remark, came out with this: *We know that after what Jesus Christ brought, there can be no more apparitions or revelations.*

A gross imbecility, much repeated today, which gives us an idea of the bishop's poor theological background. It is obvious that this is not in communion with the Supreme Magisterium which has told us: "From heaven Christ always looks with great affection at His spouse (*the Church*) exiled in this world, and when He sees it in danger, either through Himself, or through the means of His angels, or through the intercession of the one whom we call *Help of the Christians*, or through other intercessors, takes it away from the tempest waves . . . and consoles it with that peace which surpasses all knowledge."

(*Enc. Mystici Corporis Christi*, 1943)

9. The priest assigned was Father José Olano, who had recently finished his seminary studies. Thus a novice priest was sent to Garabandal, a man almost without experience, as if nothing were happening there, and as if it were simply a parish without special problems.

But if the new priest came without proper pastoral experience; he came well provided with *instructions*. It did not take long for the effects of the instructions to show themselves.

It seems that the bishop's viewpoint was this: The problem of Garabandal would resolve itself if the girls and the villagers were indoctrinated (*brain-washed*), and the visitors were treated with a firm hand. The new priest came with this program.

A remark might be made about the way he said goodbye to his parishioners from the valley of Polaciones before going to Garabandal. A man from the town who was present at his farewell Mass on that Sunday noted the things that were said and the remarks made by Fr. José Olano in his sermon. After the Mass, Father's friends from the place joked with him about the *stories about Garabandal that were going to end soon.*

I answered that it seemed an excellent idea to send a well-chosen priest; but with regard to the girls, neither he nor I had authority to determine whether or not they were to stay. Aniceta had already authorized the admission of her daughter at Pamplona, and the parents of Loli and Jacinta had also consented for them to leave for Borja.

—*In writing?*

—*Yes, Your Excellency. Yes, in writing. I have signed authorizations.*

I have always kept my principle of respecting the hierarchy, but also I have required respect in return. I have conscientiously been courteous before whoever represents God; but not weak.

On that same day, I said to Bishop Vicente: *I don't want to do things behind your back. For that reason I offered to bring the girls to you. Today I'm going to tell you a secret: A person of high station is working in Rome for the girls to be received by the Pope.* The bishop smiled broadly, as if dubious . . . We were alone, seated in a room on the first floor of the seminary at Santander. I then took two telegrams out of my briefcase, and unfolded them for him to see.

—*Are you from Aragon?*

—*From Saragossa, Your Excellency!*

The news got out and the departure was delayed . . . until, in the middle of December, I received a telephone call from Santander, announcing the arrival of a person from Rome with a letter from Cardinal Ottaviani that read: *With the permission of the bishop, or without it, bring the girls.*

I asked the person who spoke to me to take the letter to be read secretly and personally by the bishop. But he lacked the patience and enthusiasm not to be overcome by the defenses at the bishop's door! And my envoy didn't have sufficient rank; the copy of the letter remained in the hands of the vicar general.⁽¹⁰⁾ On my

10. Bishop Puchol had brought with him to Santander, as his vicar general, a priest from Navarra, also a late vocation and a man rather arbitrary in his actions: Bishop Javier Azagra. Later he was auxiliary bishop of Cartagena-Murcia.



“Conchita felt the devil present around her.”

return from Rome in the winter of 1966, when I was with the bishop, he assured me that he hadn't received it. I think he was sincere.»

At this time we might make some comments about the chancery officials at Santander who so often called for *the submission owed to the hierarchy* in order to strangle Garabandal, but who went to such efforts so that the cause would not come directly to the hierarchy, to which they should be as submissive as we.

From this can be more easily understood what Fr. Laffineur wrote:

«Certain adversaries of Garabandal, fearing the worst for themselves, made it impossible for Conchita to be received at Rome. Others, in a less high position, profited by the new situation to calumniate Conchita: *The balloon has burst. Conchita wears short skirts and listens to the radio; the vocation is gone. Garabandal is finished.*



“secret suffering”

During this time, Conchita felt the devil present around her. She was subject to interior sufferings which only the most contemplative souls know. She wrote about her secret sufferings to priests whom she trusted, and prayed to obtain permission from her mother to leave for Pamplona immediately.

Apparently the young girl, although accustomed to submitting everything to the Virgin, had not immediately understood the importance of her trip to Italy. Or else she could have thought, logically, that if this trip would take place one day, it could begin just as well from Pamplona as from Garabandal.

But Aniceta was watching. And Aniceta has a will of steel. She was convinced of the necessity and imminence of the visit to Rome and no person in the world could make her yield . . .»

(*L'Etoile dans la Montagne*)



“will of steel”

So Conchita was not to be separated from her side until she had completed her mission at Rome.

But this mission would not be accomplished until the winter of the following year, 1966. And then the final period would be placed on the long and wondrous story that had begun on June 18th, 1961 at Garabandal.

* * *

On October 30th—the last Saturday of the month of the rosary—in that painful autumn of 1965, Conchita had another encounter from above. She had gone to church to make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament,⁽¹¹⁾ and soon she felt a communication from the Virgin inside her, which not only consoled her in what she was suffering by not being able to go to the convent, but also notified her of a future meeting.

11. «I found Conchita very happy. In our conversation she mentioned that during the final days of October, when she was making her usual visit in the church to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, she had a locution in which the Virgin told her that *she should go up to the Pines on November 13th and should bring her religious articles that she had . . .*» (Letter of Dr. Ortiz to Fr. Ramón Andreu, dated December 13th, 1965.)



“Go to the Pines, and there you will see me.”

At the time Conchita wrote several letters; one of these was to a Mexican priest, Father Gustavo Morelos, dated November 8th:

«Dear Father Morelos:

You see, without receiving your reply, I'm writing you again. And it is to say that I received a locution from the Virgin and she told me: *On Saturday, November 13th, go to the Pines, and there you will see me. And bring many religious articles to me, and I will kiss them all, so that you can distribute them. My son will perform prodigies by means of them.*

Pray very much for me, so that I may soon enter the convent and be good. In union of prayer.»

The prediction was fulfilled.

The description of what occurred would be better left to Conchita herself:⁽¹²⁾

«It was a special apparition to kiss religious objects, later to distribute them, since they have a great importance.

I had a great desire for Saturday, November 13th, to come so I could see again the ones who had sown in me the happiness of God: The Virgin and the Infant Jesus.

It was raining; but it didn't matter to me that I was going up to the Pines in the rain.»

Describing this, here is what Dr. Ortiz wrote Fr. Ramón in a letter on December 13th:

«On our last trip to Garabandal, Sunday, December 5th, I was able to learn that Conchita actually had an ecstasy at the Pines on November 13th. As an interesting fact, I have to say that, although Olguita (*her neighbor*) was in her company, she later left her out of curiosity to go see an accident that had happened to a truck in La Jaraiz. This accident was the main attraction for the village.⁽¹³⁾ On that Saturday, when it was raining the most, Conchita left the people in her kitchen and went up alone to the Pines.»

Continuing with the report of the visionary:

«I brought many rosaries that had recently been given to me⁽¹⁴⁾ to distribute. As the Virgin had told me, I brought them for her to kiss.

Going up alone to the Pines—very sorry for my faults—I was saying to myself that in the future I would not fall into them, since I was ashamed to present myself like this before the Mother of God, whom my faults make suffer so much. And I believe that mine are the greatest, since I have seen her.

12. We are accurately giving the text that seems the best, and which differs only in very small matters from others that were also written by Conchita.

13. Apparently at that time in Garabandal a truck accident attracted more attention, by its unusualness, than the girl's ecstasy.

14. We know of one man from France on a pilgrimage in Lourdes who got the idea, or inspiration, to send Conchita 100 rosaries of five decades and four of 15. The package arrived in time for November 13th.



“a special apparition to kiss religious objects”



“a very sweet voice—clearly the Virgin’s!”

When I came to the Pines, I started taking out the rosaries that I was carrying. And while I was taking them out, I heard a very sweet voice — clearly the Virgin’s! — easily distinguished from all others, calling me by my name. And I answered: *What?*

And then I saw her with the Infant Jesus in her arms. She came dressed as usual and was smiling broadly.

And I said to her, *I have come to bring the rosaries so that you can kiss them.*

And she said to me, *I see that.*

I had a Chiclet in my mouth, although I did not chew it after I saw her, but stuck it against my cheek.

And she told me, *Conchita, why don’t you give up your Chiclet and offer it as a sacrifice for the glory of my Son?*⁽¹⁵⁾

Ashamed, I took it out of my mouth and threw it on the ground.

Then she said to me, *Do you remember what I told you on your feastday, that you would suffer much on the earth. Well, I am telling it to you again. But have confidence in us and offer everything to our hearts for the good of your brothers; that way you will feel us near to you.*

15. The Virgin obviously did not condemn the use of the Chiclet as a fault. She simply invited Conchita—so devoted to her— to fulfill in this way *the making of small sacrifices.*



“I come for all my children.”

And I said to her, *Oh, Our Mother, how unworthy I am of so many graces that you’ve given me! And still you come to me today, to lighten the little cross that I have now.*

—*Conchita, I do not come only for you. I come for all my children, with the desire of bringing them to our hearts.*

Give me all the things that you have brought so that I may kiss them.

And I gave them to her. I was also carrying a crucifix with me, and she kissed it and said to me, *Put it in the hands of the Child Jesus.* And so I did. He didn’t say anything to me.

I spoke to the Virgin, *I will carry this cross with me to the convent,* but she didn’t say anything to me either.

After kissing everything, she said to me, *By the kiss that I have put on these articles, my Son will use them to perform prodigies. Distribute them. And I thought about doing this.*



“Tell me about my children!”



“always with you, and with all my children.”

It seemed that she was with me a very short time. She told me also:

This is the last time you will see me here. But I will always be with you, and with all my children.

She also said to me:

Conchita, you should visit my Son in the tabernacle more. Why do you let yourself be carried away by slothfulness so as not to visit Him? He is there, waiting for you day and night.

As I have said before, it was raining very much, and the Virgin and the Child Jesus didn't get wet. When I was seeing them, I didn't know that it was raining; but afterwards, when I didn't see them, I was soaking wet.

I also said to the Virgin: *Oh, how happy I am when I see you. Why don't you take me with you now?*

—Remember what I told you on your feast-day: *When presenting yourself before God, you have to show your hands full of works done by you for your brothers and for the glory of God. Now, your hands are empty.*

Nothing more. The joyous time had passed in which I was with my best friend and Mother in

After that, she asked me to tell her the petitions that other people had given to me; and I did this.

She continued: *Tell me, Conchita. Tell me about my children! I hold them all under my mantle.*

And I said to her: *It's very small, it won't hold all of them.* And she smiled.

—Conchita, do you know why I did not come personally on June 18th to give the message for the world? *Because it hurt me to say those things. But they had to be said, for your own good; and if you accomplish the message, it will be for the glory of God. I love you very much, and desire your salvation, to reunite you here in heaven around the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. You, Conchita, will you respond to us?*

—If I were always seeing you, then it would be yes. But if not, I don't know, since I'm very bad.

—Do all that you can on your part; and we will help you, and also my daughters, Loli, Jacinta and Mari Cruz.

heaven, and with the Child Jesus. I have stopped seeing Them, but I haven't stopped feeling Them.

Again They have left in my soul a peace, a joy and a desire to conquer my faults and to love Them with all my strength!

Formerly, the Virgin told me that Jesus wasn't sending the Chastisement to torment us, but to help us, and reprimand us for not paying attention. He is sending us the Warning to purify us before the Miracle, in which He will clearly show the love that He holds for us. Because of this He wants us to accomplish the message.»

* * *

That was the episode of Saturday, November 13th, 1965 at Garabandal. The final chapter in an unparalleled story, which is still too recent to be evaluated with sufficient perspective.

We are coming to the ending, and endings are tinged with sadness.

As she said to Conchita, «*This is the last time you will see me here*», the Virgin's voice had an ineffable sweetness.

What had begun four years previously with a blast of thunder on a sunlit day in June was coming to an end now, without fanfare, on a dismal overcast day in November.

«It was raining . . . I went up alone . . . And the Virgin said to me . . .»

There would be no more meetings at the scene where so many had taken place.

Yes, it was all over. Farewell in the rain. Why do wonderful things pass so swiftly?

When Conchita returned to herself and lifted her knees off the damp ground, when she became aware that she was alone beneath the Pines in the rain, she herself could not say if the drops of water running down her cheeks were raindrops that the clouds were weeping for an unhappy world, or tears that she was crying because she would never again see the one she had seen so often.

Certainly the girl was in no hurry to go down from the Pines after the vision was over. Her state

of mind would not allow it. She had to remain there a while, alone with her feelings.

Sadly and poignantly, she arranged and put back all the rosaries distinguished by Our Lady's kiss. Then she took a few slow, sad steps toward the crest of the ledge on which the nine solitary pine trees have their roots, and near the cliff edge she paused. There, partially hidden in the mist and rain was the unforgettable panorama: the mountainpeaks, the steep slopes, the winding valleys, the woods and meadows with their lonely cabins; and nearer, at her feet, the village: her village of San Sebastián de Garabandal. Her village, which during those unforgettable years, seemed to have been the Virgin's village! Here Her merciful and smiling footsteps had passed; Here she had visited her poor and humble houses, her winding streets, her innumerable streetcorners, her church that knew her so intimately, her cemetery, that gathered all for the last rest.

How the Virgin had immersed herself in that village. As a Mother, for whom nothing about her children lacked interest. «*She was interested in everything*»—Conchita remembered with tears in her eyes—«*even in our cows.*»

Well could it be said that this was the most beautiful story of mankind since the time of Christ: the second life of the Blessed Virgin on earth; and words alone cannot adequately thank her for it.

After the farewell in the rain, *all this* has passed into history.

But of *all this*, now history, there forever remains something ineffably new and eternal here, that those will find who come with faith, and from which they can draw strength to uphold the highest hopes and the greatest love.

*This is the last time
you will see me here.*

*But I will be always with you,
And with all my children.*

Of all the words said at Garabandal, these are the last and the best.

