The Story of Garabandal

A Summary of the Events 1961-1965



Where and what is Garabandal? It is an isolated hamlet of some 300 people nestled in the Cantabrian Mountains of north-western Spain. Like Fatima and Lourdes, Garabandal is a place of unearthly serenity and beauty. A fiction writer's imagination could not create a more appropriate setting for a religious event of great significance.

San Sebastian de Garabandal is situated at the very end of a winding road cut into a mountainside that leads up from the village of Cosio. A solitary cluster of nine pine trees stands out starkly against the horizon to the south. The village itself consists of some 80 solid rustic stone houses huddled together on a small strip of land overlooking a wooded valley. This is the stage for "The Story of Garabandal".

The saga opens on Sunday, June 18th, 1961 at 8.30pm in the evening. Four simple, unsophisticated girls were playing in a sunken lane called the *calleja*, at the southern extremity of the village. Suddenly, a sound of thunder was heard and later a brilliant angel appeared, first to Conchita (Maria Concepcion) Gonzalez and then almost immediately afterwards to Mari Loli (Maria Dolores) Mazon, Jacinta Gonzalez and Mari Cruz (Maria Cruz) Gonzalez. The angel did not speak and in a few moments disappeared.

The Coming of Our Lady

The angel appeared several times more. The first time he spoke was on July 1, 1961. He said, ***"Do you know why I have come? It is to announce to you that tomorrow, Sunday, the Virgin Mary will appear to you as Our Lady of Mount Carmel".***



Conchita, Mari Cruz, Mari Loli& Jacinta

The angel's mission was to prepare the children for Our Lady's coming and to be her messenger. He returned with her the next day, but came back much less frequently after that.

However, the Blessed Virgin began appearing almost every day and occasionally was accompanied by the Infant Jesus Whom she carried in her arms.

A Mother with Her Children

The four girls talked with the Blessed Virgin with great simplicity. They talked about their everyday life, about working in the fields, and about getting bronzed by the sun. Our Lady delighted in their talk.

A charming and almost disarming spontaneity marked the apparitions. In her Diary, Conchita mentions that the angel and Our Lady often smiled and

laughed at their childish remarks. He says several times that the Blessed Virgin kissed them. On a few occasions when Mary came with the Infant Jesus, she allowed them to take Him in their arms. They also did simple little things to amuse and please Him, such as hiding pebbles in their sleeves and in the tresses of their hair. Once, Our Lady took the crown of small golden stars from her head and permitted the children to hold it in their hands. What is the meaning of this? Perhaps it teaches us the value of childlike simplicity and unquestioning faith.

The First Formal Message

On July 4, 1961, Our Lady gave the girls what has come to be known as the **"First Message."** This Message was inscribed on a sign that had appeared under the angel's feet in June, but the children did not understand the inscription at the time. Our Lady told the girls to announce the Message publicly on October 18. They did. In the fall of 1961, the children made known to the world the Message of the Blessed Virgin at Garabandal.

"We must make many sacrifices, perform much penance and visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently. But first, we must lead good lives. If we do not, a chastisement will befall us. The cup is already filing up and if we do not change, a very great chastisement will come upon us."

The Second Formal Message

The ***"Second Message"*** was given four years later toward the end of the apparitions. The Blessed Virgin told Conchita on January 1, 1965, that the archangel St Michael would appear on June 18, and would deliver a message for the world in her name. Through St Michael, Our Lady complained that her First Message was not heeded and warned the world this would be her last. She said:

"As my Message of October 18 has not been complied with and has not been made known to the world, I am advising you that this is the last one. Before, the cup was filling up. Now it is flowing over. Many cardinals, many bishops, and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them. Less and less importance is being given to the Eucharist. You should turn the wrath of God away from yourselves by your efforts. If you ask His forgiveness with sincere hearts, He will pardon you. I, your mother, through the intercession of St Michael the Archangel, ask you to amend your lives. You are now receiving the last warnings. I love you very much and do not want your condemnation. Pray to Us with sincerity and We will grant your requests. You should make more sacrifices. Think about the passion of Jesus."

The Private Messages

Many of the messages delivered by Our Lady were of a purely private nature. Some were words of enlightenment or comfort directed to people who came to the village with personal problems. Others were statements that revealed the hidden thoughts or actions of visitors, some of whom were doubting priests.

The Miracle of the Visible Host



A miracle to confirm the events was requested by the girls early in the apparitions. One was given to them, one that Conchita called a ***"little miracle,"*** *un milagrucu,* using a diminutive proper to the Santander region. A visible Host appeared suddenly and mysteriously on Conchita's tongue at 1.40 in the morning on July 19, 1962. This precise miracle was announced 15 days in advance by Conchita at the bidding of the Archangel St Michael, who gave her the Communion. Many people were on hand for the event and one man, who was standing inches

from Conchita, took some pictures of it using only flashlight illumination. The miracle of the visible Host was performed to confirm the apparitions of Garabandal. However the greatest proof of all will be the ***"extremely great"*** Miracle for the world of which Conchita speaks in her Diary.

The Great Future Miracle

The ***"extremely great"*** Miracle which Conchita mentions in her Diary is more fully discussed in the notes she gave Francisco Sanchez-Ventura, author of **The Apparitions of Garabandal:**

"I am the only one to whom theBlessed Virgin spoke of the Miracle. She forbade me to say what it will consist of. I can't announce the date either until eight days before it is due to occur. What I can reveal is that it will coincide with a event in the Church and with the feast of a saint, martyr of the Eucharist; that it will take place at 8.30 on a Thursday evening: that it will be visible to all those who are in the village and surrounding mountains; that the sick who are present will be cured and the incredulous will believe. It will be the greatest miracle that Jesus will have performed for the world. There won't be the slightest doubt that it comes from God and that it is for the good of mankind. A sign of the Miracle – un senal del milagro – which it will be possible to film or televise, will remain forever – para siempre – at the pines."

On September 14, 1965, Conchita said: ***"The sign that will remain forever at the pines is something we will be able to photograph, televise and see, but not touch. It will be evident that it is not a thing of this world but from God."***

At another time, concerning the great Miracle, she added that, ***"it would last about 15 minutes."*** On August 10, 1971, while talking to a group of Americans, she offered this revealing



The Pines

information: ***"It will take place on or between the eighth and sixteenth of March, April orMay. It will not happen in February or June."*** Eight days in advance of the Miracle, Conchita will give notice to the world about its coming. Prior to the eight-day notice, God will send a Warning to the entire world or purify it for the great Miracle. Therefore, the world will receive two advance notices – the Warning and the eight-day notice.

The Warning

In a letter dated June2, 1965, Conchita writes: ***"The Blessed Virgin told me on the 1st January that a Warning would be given before the Miracle so that the world might amend itself. ThisWarning, like the Chastisement (another prophesied event explained below), is a very fearful thing for the good as well as for the wicked. It will draw the good closer to God and it will warn the wicked that the end of time is coming and that these are the last warnings. There is more to it than this, but it can't be said by letter. No one can stop it from happening. It is certain, although I know nothing concerning the day or the date."***

In another apparition, the year of the Warning was made known to Mari Loli but she has felt impelled not to reveal it. (*** ***Mari Loli*** has since died).

The Chastisement

Our Lady showed Conchita, Mari Loli and Jacinta in July of 1962, a vision of the impending Chastisement. The visionaries screamed in terror upon seeing this vision and begged Our Lady for God to spare the children. The Blessed Virgin told the girls the Chastisement was conditional on whether or not mankind would heed her Messages given during the apparitions.

The Chastisement is mentioned only briefly by Conchita in her

Diary, She describes it as something ***"very, very great, in keeping with what we deserve."*** But she advises, ***"if the world changes,"*** the Chastisement can be ***"averted".*** Conchita elaborated on this event in a note to Francisco Sanchez-Ventura, ***"The Chastisement is conditional and depends on whether or not mankind heeds the Messages of the Blessed Virgin and the Miracle. If it should take place, I know what it will consist of because the Blessed Virgin told me about it, but I am not permitted to say what it is. Moreover, I have seen the Chastisement. I can assure you that if it comes, it is worse than being enveloped in fire, worse than having fire above and beneath you. I do not know how much time will elapse between the Miracle and the Chastisement."***

Unexplainable Events

Other unusual things, for which there is no human explanation also took place along with the apparitions or visions. Taken all together, they constitute a powerful argument in favour of the authenticity of the events. The three calls, or llamadas, which preceded and announced Our Lady's coming; the ecstatic marches; oscillations and falls; the children's excessive weight to others and exceptional lightness to each other in ecstasy; their unexplainable knowledge of what people totally unknown to them had done or were thinking; the kissing of objects by Our Lady and the amazing way they were distributed to people during the apparitions – these are some of the exceptional unexplainable phenomena encountered at Garabandal.

Garabandal A Unique Event

Garabandal is unique in the history of Marian apparitions for a number of reasons.

1. The number of apparitions, somewhere in the vicinity of 2,000 is amazing.
2. The appearance and extensive use of a new means of heavenly communication (not usually encountered along with apparitions having a public message) namely, the locution (an interior voice), sets Garabandal apart from Lourdes and Fatima.
3. The span of time over which the apparitions (June 18, 1961 to November 13, 1965) and locutions (June 19, 1961 to February 13, 1966) occurred, is exceptional.
4. The things announced for the future and yet to come – the Warning, the Great Miracle and the permanent sign at the pines, and the conditional Chastisement – are most unusual.
5. The variety of the sites where the visions took place – in the church, at the door of the church, in homes on various streets of the village, at the pines, in the cemetery – is astonishing.
6. The time at which they took place, literally at every hour of the day and night, is quite uncommon.
7. The abundance of secondary or supporting mystical phenomena, such as the miracle of the visible Host, the llamadas or calls and the ecstatic marches and falls, is almost overwhelming.
8. The trials of the visionaries, the difficulties and opposition that have accompanied the events almost continually are so unusual that there does not seem to be any natural explanation for them.
9. The manner in which Garabandal has managed to overcome all obstacles and become more and more widely known and accepted is another of the almost unbelievable happenings connected with it.
10. Finally, and most important of all, this spreading of the Garabandal Message has been accompanied everywhere with an amazing explosion of grace manifested in cures, conversions and tremendous growth in love of God, of neighbour, of the Blessed Virgin and of the Eucharist on the part of both those who disseminate the Message and those who heed it.

These are what are known as the ***"fruits of Garabandal."***