

Emotional Encounter With The Mystery

Reprinted with kind permission from GARABANDAL JOURNAL November-December 2004
Excerpted from *She Went in Haste to the Mountain* by Eusebio Garcia de Pesquera.

The first Holy Week in Garabandal during the apparitions (April 15-22, 1962) left indelible traces engraved on many hearts. In the same places and at the same time that Mercedes Salisachs had the personal experiences that have previously been recounted, another distinguished visitor to the village was also having his own deeply felt experiences. The visitor was a doctor from the city of Vitoria named Jose de la Vega. A believer, but not easily impressed, he went up to Garabandal, like many others, simply out of curiosity to see what was going on. What happened there had such an effect on him that he felt it his duty in conscience to make it known. Under his name, an article appeared in the newspaper *El Pensamiento Alaves* on April 27, 1962, during Easter Week:

From the eighteenth of last June, the Virgin passes almost daily through the winding streets of a little village lost in the hills of the Picos de Europa. This is what is affirmed by four girls between 11 and 12 years of age, born and raised in the Santander mountains, without any more education than grade school and instructions by their parish priest.

The entire village of about 70 families has lived for months in complete disorder. Once or more on almost every day at pre-fixed hours the girls pray, speak to, and kiss the Virgin, and are swept up in deep ecstasy. The simple parents of these young girls are frightened. The Church prudently refrains from giving its opinion. The doctors, even the most incredulous, have recognized that this matter doesn't have any logical explanation. But thousands of believers, coming each day to the village from the most faraway places, find in fervent and tearful faith the only explanation for the extraordinary events that happen every night at San Sebastian de Garabandal.

I spent Holy Week among these people. I listened to the inhabitants of the village and to the visitors. I talked with the girls before and after their visions. And as I could find no professional explanation for what I myself had seen, I was forced to believe in a miracle.

"Have you seen the Virgin?", some people asked me.

"No. I haven't seen her. But I have felt her with my heart and soul."

A Jesuit Father, who was with me there, said to me: "*I see you are very skeptical, doctor.*"

"No, Father, that isn't so. I'm completely confused. My most vehement desire would be to feel like the girls and those who accompany them do. But you know better than I that faith is a gift that God doesn't concede to everyone in the same way."

Sometime after this conversation, I was able to follow an apparition for the second time and close at hand. It was the dawn of Holy Saturday. It rained constantly, and the entire village seemed to be a cake of mud and stones. With flashlights in our hands, we hurriedly followed one of the visionaries who was running through the streets in ecstasy. With her hands joined, she was holding a crucifix; her head was tilted sharply backwards, her eyes fixed on the sky, but she was smiling. From time to time, she knelt down, prayed, and kissed the cross. Half the village and all the visitors, including children, followed her as if hypnotized.



Mari Loli in ecstasy places a medal on a chain around the neck of the rightful owner much in the same way that she would have returned the medals to Dr. de la Vega and his wife.

We ended up seeing her in the modest kitchen of her house — where she was chatting with us half asleep; it was four o'clock in the morning! — abruptly enter into ecstasy again and fall on her knees without burning herself on the hot stones of the blazing fireplace. Later she got up, and as if transported by angels, she began to run through the village. Stumbling in the darkness and splashing in mud up to our ears, we followed after her, unable to hold ourselves back. I asked God ardently for the grace of faith. In spite of the dim light, we ran through all the little streets of the village. We went to the courtyard of the church, the cemetery, and then to the hill where the Virgin appeared for the first time.

The roughness of the way, the blackness of the night, the bad weather, and my flabby condition as a city dweller made me stumble so many times that I fell behind. Finally, I could go no further and decided to wait for them to return. On the other hand, my wife didn't want to stop, in spite of being short of breath, so she continued onward, asking help for my lack of faith.

Soon the girl stopped before reaching the crest of the hill and came back down the trail marching backwards, hardly touching the stones, continuously looking upward and smiling at the sky. On coming to

my level, she stopped again, fell hard on the stony ground on her bare knees, raised the cross to the sky and then gave it to me to kiss! Then she searched with her hands among the multitude of chains and rosaries that hung from her neck, seeking for a special chain, while whispering to the invisible apparition, "Tell me which one it is. Is it this one?"

With her hand she raised up the medal to give to the Virgin to kiss in her vision. And we all heard her whisper again, "Tell me whose it is." And then, without hesitating any longer, she turned toward my wife and put the chain around her neck, and without looking, latched the little gold fastener in place. Thrilled and weeping, my wife fell on her knees, as I and many of those witnessing the unusual scene did. The girl had her kiss the medal blessed by the breath of the Virgin, and helped her get up from the ground with an angelical smile that we will never forget.

Later my turn came. In the same way as with my wife, and with the same or similar words, she placed around my neck my medal that had been kissed by the Virgin. I could not contain myself, and tears ran down my cheeks.

At the same time, I found the explanation for everything I had not understood. In the heavenly expression of the girl, I saw a reflection of the Virgin's invisible presence over our heads. On my knees as I was, weeping copiously, I began to ask pardon from God for my lack of faith.

I will return to San Sebastian de Garabandal, as everyone who has gone there returns. I will bring doctors and friends, and I will ask them to try to explain the mystery of the four village girls from (a *Montana*. But still more, I will ask God that the feeling I felt on the early morning of Holy Saturday never leave me. It is so beautiful to believe in a miracle!

Reprinted with kind permission from [GARABANDAL JOURNAL](#) • November-December 2004
to order subscription: [GARABANDAL JOURNAL](#).

Back for more [Garabandal Information](#)

