

Humility

"What God loves above all is humility. What displeases Him above all is pride."

[From a letter to Fr. Luis Retenaga, dated 13 October 1963. Reprinted in *She Went in Haste to the Mountain*, p. 479 (Eusebio Pesquera, trans. by B. Miller; pub. by Our Lady of Mount Carmel de Garabandal, Inc., 2000)]

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These words, spoken by the Blessed Virgin Mary to the visionary Mari Loli in a locution in 1963, so sublime in their simplicity, are the key to a true understanding of Garabandal.

For all its amazing phenomena and unexplained events, the essence of Garabandal is not found in its apparitions but in its message, which is above all of a message of practicing humility in daily life. The visionaries themselves pointed out repeatedly that belief in the apparitions means nothing without believing - and living -- the message. Conchita and Loli have written many times "There is no point in our believing in the apparitions if we do not heed the

message." [*Star on the Mountain*, p. 118 (Laffineur and le Pelletier, trans. by Service de Traduction Champlian; pub. by Our Lady of Mount Carmel de Garabandal, Inc., 1992).]

Yet as humans, we are instinctively drawn to what we do not understand. We want to divine the mystery of the unexplained, and, in so doing, quantify and reduce it to something that fits within our comprehension, as limited as it is. There is surely no harm in this human attraction to the mystery of Garabandal, but to make it the centrepiece of one's faith is to miss the point entirely.



Consider the attitude of the visionaries. Four young girls, favoured with literally thousands of visits from the Blessed Virgin Mary, on truly intimate terms with the Mother of God. For months on end, on an almost daily basis, they prayed, talked, played games, and even held Her Son, the infant Jesus, in their arms. These children were, quite literally, the most privileged people on earth. And yet their attitude was characterized, above all, by genuine *humility*.

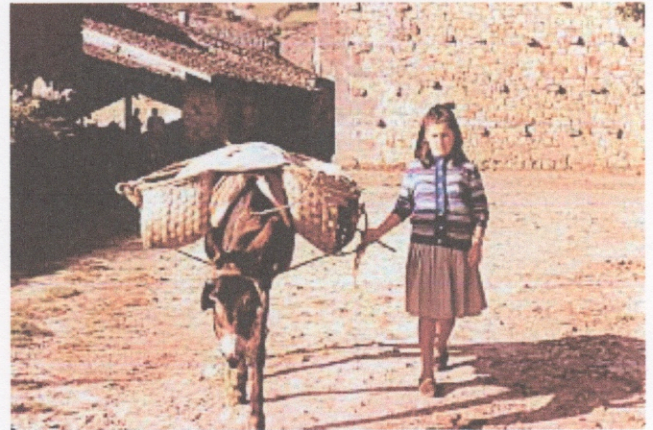
Try to imagine what your reaction might be if one day you opened the door and were face to face with the Mother of God. Then multiply that hundreds of times, all the while taking part in numerous phenomena far beyond the scope of human explanation and being constantly sought after for advice and help by literally thousands of individuals from all walks of life. Now try to imagine

what this would be like if you were eleven or twelve years old. Practicing humility under those circumstances would become very difficult, to say the least.

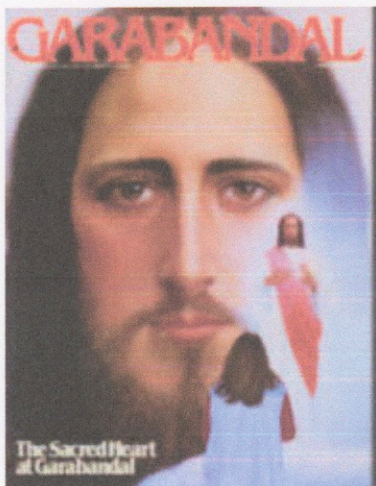
Yet this is exactly what Conchita, Jacinta, Loli, and Mari Cruz did, and continue to do to this day. It is precisely this that God asks of us as well. It is fair to say that - in this life at least -- most of us will not play tag or romp through the fields with the Blessed Virgin Mary. But we do share in the same call for humility that She made to the visionaries, *and* the same wonderful promises that follow from heeding this call.

Conchita was told, in a locution whilst at school in Pamplona in 1966, by Christ, "*Love humility, simplicity. Never think that what you have done is much.*" [*Ibid.*, p. 129.; [She Went in Haste to the Mountain](#), p. 549.] Stunning words, indeed, but spoken with love. They should serve as a reminder that no matter who we are, or think we are, we must continually strive to do more good, to do so without thought of gain or personal honour, in short, to be humble.

This is no easy thing to do. For many of us, conquering pride and living a humble life is a lifelong pursuit, literally the single most difficult thing in the world. As Conchita put it, humility is a fragile virtue. Once, in response to a query why she did not accept an offer to comment upon the events of Garabandal, she stated: "If I were a holy person, I wouldn't mind going and saying something. But since I am not and am proud, what can I say? So, I didn't accept." [*Ibid.*, p. 129.; [She Went in Haste to the Mountain](#), p. 549.] The lesson is clear: The visionaries themselves readily admit their shortcomings and pride. Should we not also do so?



Fortunately, in spite of the daily difficulties we encounter in living a humble life, we are both forgiven and encouraged to a renewed pursuit of humility. When Jesus appeared to Jacinta, He pointed to His Sacred Heart - a heart filled with unlimited forgiveness - and beckoned to her to draw closer to Him. When the children failed to obey the Virgin's commands or sought to impress Her with their ideas of holiness, She lovingly set them on the correct path, reminding them to be good in the small, every day matters of life. What better definition of humility is there than this?



For those who truly seek to understand and follow the message of Garabandal, the way is clear. A genuine commitment to living a life imbued with humility is what is asked of us. It is a difficult path more often than not. For every one of us, there are - and will be -- times when we are tempted to think we have reached a point of being humble enough, especially in comparison with how others live. There are - and will be -- times when we are lulled into thinking we have earned the right to rest upon our laurels. There are - and will be -- times when we want to believe we are indispensable.

When we confess our sins, we are forgiven for these flights of fancy. We are, after all, human. But now let us listen again to the words Jesus spoke to Conchita in [Pamplona](#) and consider them as a message for ourselves: "Never think that what you have done is much." It is when we learn to live by these words that we truly live the message of Garabandal and can hope to share in its promise.