Maximina's Key
PRECIOUS SOUVENIRS

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Very few, if any, of the houses in San Sebastian de Garabandal are in the same condition that they were 42 years ago when the apparitions first began. With the influx of visitors, the sale of property and the building of new homes, have come improved economic conditions so that now just about all the dwellings have been renovated in whole or in part.

The house of Maximina, Conchita's aunt, is no exception, but for one thing. The front door, now time and weather worn, is the same one that was there in 1961. Maximina, who presently lives part of the year in an apartment in Santander, could certainly afford to replace the door, but because of the following episode, she has chosen not to do so.



PHOTO: Maximina still has her key and (inset) the door.

One day either in 1961 or 1962, Conchita went out to work in the pastureland higher up in the mountains. One hour later, Maximina left her house to join her, but, as she closed the door behind her, she left the key in the lock.

Several hours later, Maximina returned only to find that the key was gone. She searched high and low but to no avail.

For the next two days, Maximina was without the key until finally, on the third day, she decided to present her problem to Conchita. It was a simple enough request to ask the Virgin the whereabouts of the missing key.

Shortly after that, Conchita fell into ecstasy at night near Maximina's house. Bystanders could hear her speaking to the Virgin about the key but because the girls in ecstasy always spoke in low, husky whispers, the people couldn't make out what she was saying. One person must have heard the visionary mention the pile of fire wood near the front door and went with a flashlight to take a look, but found nothing. A few moments later Conchita, in ecstasy, walked up to the front of the house and with her head tilted sharply back and eyes facing upward, reached down into the pile of wood and pulled out the lost key. Then, after holding it up to the Virgin with the crucifix she had in the other hand, and still facing upward, she plunged the key in one deft motion squarely into the lock in the door.

Maximina now had her key back, right in the place where she had left it—and much more. "You notice that my door is very old," said Maximina, "but because of this I still have it." And the key also. As happened so often at Garabandal, Our Lady had turned simple, ordinary objects into very precious souvenirs.

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