

I Have NEVER Doubted

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Miguel Gonzalez, conchita's youngest brother, gives his personal account on the Garabandal events.

"Do you know that an angel appeared to four girls in the village of San Sebastian de Garabandal? " These words introduced me to the apparitions in my village. I was almost 18 years old. It was 7 o'clock in the morning in July of 1961 and my brother Serafin and I were seated in a restaurant in Torrelavega.

My brother's friend stopped by the table as we were eating breakfast, and it was he that asked the question. Of course, we knew nothing about the apparitions, since we had been working in the city of Leon, some 100 miles from Garabandal, and were just returning home for the summer.

Although my brother Aniceto had written us a letter about the apparitions, it didn't reach Leon until after we had left for home. "Yes, it's true!" continued Serafin's friend, "Just now a friend of mine who drives a taxi came from there." We started to laugh and at that moment the taxi driver came into the restaurant. When the question was asked again of him, his reply, "Yes the angel eats soup," provoked such a round of hearty laughter that it placed the whole subject in a ridiculous vein. "Yes it's certain, it's certain," repeated Serafin's friend, but no one paid heed to him.



An ecstatic march.

We went on to my uncle Paulino's house, my mother's brother, who lived in Torrelavega. We arrived there in the afternoon and were greeted with the question, "Do you know that an angel appears to four girls and, according to the newspapers, one of them is your sister?" The newspaper pictures showed a young girl with

light brown hair and long braids to her waist. Conchita's hair used to be light brown but as she grew older it darkened naturally. Now the news of the apparitions took on a serious tone and I turned to Serafin and said, "Well, let's go home right now." But Serafin, who was a very calm soul, answered, "No, no, we're tired now, we'll leave in the morning."

The next day we set out for Pesues where we boarded a bus to Cosio. From Cosio, suitcase in hand, we walked to Garabandal. The mountain road to Garabandal was a sea of people, one line of people ascending, and one line descending. As the people approached us they would say, "They must be Conchita's brothers because she said in an apparition they would be arriving tonight." When we reached our home about 12:30 in the morning, there were mobs of people both inside and outside the house. My brother Aniceto was in the kitchen. I thought to myself, "How peaceful we used to live, now look at this!" It was 3 or 4 in the morning before the people left and we could go to bed.

I Witness In Awe

I have never doubted for one moment the apparitions of Garabandal. I knew my sister Conchita well enough to detect easily if she were pretending or telling the truth. The things that happened during the apparitions were incredible and all the events so impressed me that I can recall them as if they happened yesterday. Each night, each apparition was different. I was deeply impressed when I witnessed my first apparition, the first time I heard the girls pray the Rosary, the first time they ran to the Pines and walked down backwards. Even the stories of lost objects suddenly being found filled me with awe and wonder.

The first time I witnessed the apparitions it was the most profound night of my life. I felt very nervous, not only because I had never experienced such an event, but because I did not completely understand some of the things that were happening. For instance, during the ecstasy people were shining powerful lights into Conchita's eyes or sticking her with pins on her arms and around her eyes. In no case did she blink or give any kind of reaction to the testing. The doctors even tried to lift Conchita, but they were not able. Even the crying of the people surrounding the girls caused me to feel uneasy.

From July 18, 1961 until October 1, 1961 I witnessed the girls in ecstasy every day. Sometimes there were one, two, or three visits of Our Lady between 8 o'clock at night and 5 and 6 in the morning. After that year I was in Garabandal only for Christmas and the summer, because I went back to Leon to work as a mechanic.

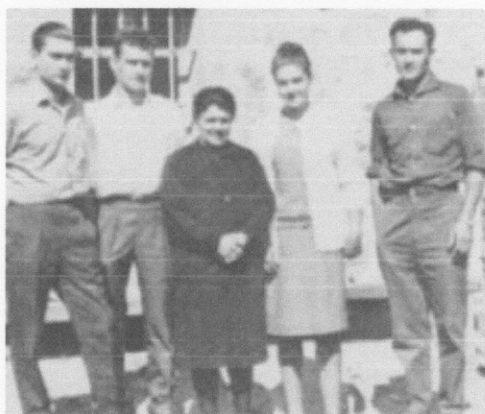


Mari Cruz, Conchita and Mari Loli are questioned by a priest shortly after the apparitions first began.

One time I decided to test the girls myself. There was much talk about how fast the girls ran when they received their "calls" from Our Lady. I thought to myself, "Well they can't leave me behind because they are only 12 year old girls and I'm an 18 year old boy." One evening about 8 o'clock, in July, 1961, Jacinta, Mari Cruz, and Conchita were sitting in my mother's kitchen eating sandwiches. I don't remember if Mari Loli was there also. They had taken a few bites when suddenly they started to run to answer their "call." I also started after them. Before I reached the cuadro, I could hear the bang - the thump - with which their knees hit the rocks in the calleja. It had been impossible to keep up with them even though I had run as fast as I could.

It is also my thought that if the world continues on its path of sin as it is now, the punishment will come.

The incident that gave me the greatest proof of the authenticity of the apparitions happened just before the July 18, 1962 miracle of the visible Communion. It was between 8 and 10 in the evening when Conchita asked me, "Do you have a medal or a chain?" I answered, "No, I don't, I must have lost it," She then gave me a new medal with the instructions, "When a priest comes to the house ask him to bless it." Sometime later, on an evening when Conchita went into ecstasy in the kitchen, she had many rosaries, chains and scapulars in her hand. Although I was in the corner of the room outside the circle of people, I saw her get up from her knees and give the religious objects to the Virgin to be kissed. Seeing this I thought to myself, "Why didn't I give her my chain so she could give my medal to Our Lady to be kissed?" I had no sooner finished thinking this when Conchita, still holding her hand up high, turned around, walked over to me, took off my medal and gave it to the Virgin to be kissed. Then she put it back around my neck.



The Gonzalez family from left: Miguel (the author), Cetuco (who died in 1966), Aniceta, Conchita and Serafin.

During 1961 it was suggested by a priest from Santander that the girls should have a change of environment, with the idea that it might change them completely. It was also suggested that Conchita go to the beach at Santander for a few days. While there, the priest suggested that Conchita's hair be cut because her braids made her easily recognizable by the people, and she was drawing a lot of attention. At the beauty parlor, when Conchita was in the chair, the hairdresser who started to cut her braids fainted, and another had to finish cutting her hair. I don't know why this happened.

Another day, while still in Santander, Conchita, coming from the beach, was in front of the Cathedral of Santander, when she went into ecstasy right in the doorway. Of course, many people including several priests crowded around at once and they tried to get her inside. With all the people who tried to move her there was no way to lift her from the ground. Then, finally, with the concerted effort of five men, they got her inside. She continued at the same point in ecstasy.

The Miracle of the Host

At about 10 o'clock this night, my mother told me, "Miguel, stand at the doorway so that no more people come into the house. There's no more room." The door was opened so I sat in the doorway trying to stop people from entering, but they just stepped around and over me. Then about 11 o'clock I closed the door and said to Conchita, "I'm going to bed because tonight there's nothing happening." But she pleaded, "Wait a little longer, because in a little while I'll be going out." I think she had had a call. In about an hour, Conchita went upstairs where there were some relatives and many other people. She went out the door and, in spite of the large crowd gathered outdoors, she was able to pass through. As for me, when I went out, I had to jump over people and squeeze through here and there. I had a very difficult time getting to Conchita. By the time I got there, she was already on her knees. I saw her make the sign of the cross and the Act of Contrition. I tell you this, as if the event is engraved in my mind. She put out her tongue and in an instant — boom - the Host was there. (Miguel snapped his fingers to emphasize the suddenness of the appearance). I don't know where it came from. So suddenly the Host was on her tongue. She kept it there for a minute or so and then she swallowed, made the Sign of the Cross, got up and left.

I had heard about Mr. Damians from Barcelona who took the picture of the Miracle of the Host, but I had never met him personally until I was introduced to him at Joey's house in January 1972.

The Rosary

I can remember how important a part the Rosary played in the Garabandal apparitions. On one occasion, a terribly stormy, snowy night, Conchita got up, dressed, and walked around the village, to the Pines and to the church saying the Rosary. It was about 3 o'clock in the morning. As people heard her going through the village, they dressed and joined her in prayer.

A friend of Serafm's had expressed a wish to be present during an apparition. However, since he worked from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. it was hard for him to stay awake until the late hours of the night to witness an ecstasy. One day, about 1 o'clock in the morning, Conchita, while in ecstasy, started to say the Rosary. She went to this man's house and stood outside praying the Rosary until he awoke, dressed and joined the group of praying people.

A Religious Family

It would be difficult for me to say whether I have noticed a great spiritual change in Conchita since the apparitions. Remember, Conchita was 12 years old, a child, before the apparitions. Then, too, she had always gone to Mass and Communion whenever a priest celebrated Mass in our village church. In my mother's house, every night when supper was over, we immediately prayed the Rosary. We just put down our spoons for the last time and picked up our Rosary automatically. The Mass, Communion and Rosary I have always associated with Conchita.

My brother Aniceto, who died in 1966 when he was 28 years old, was the most religious of us all, I think. He had two operations for ulcers within a few days. He was a man who did not go to bars. He went from home to work, and from work he'd come home and stay there. Before he died, he had just one girlfriend and did not bother with any other girl. Every night he would go to pray the Rosary with the people of the village.

My mother was not only very religious but she was very strict with her children. Even when I went home for a visit, if I went out at night my mother would wait up in the kitchen till 2 or 3 in the morning until I came home. Whenever there was no Mass in Garabandal, she would walk about three and a half miles to the church in Cosio for the 6 a.m. Mass and then back up the mountain road. She did this rain or shine, summer or winter.

As for me, I have always practised my religion, but now, I reflect and meditate more about life in relation to the apparitions and messages of Garabandal. I firmly believe that the Angel St. Michael and the Virgin of Mt. Carmel appeared in the village of San Sebastian de Garabandal to my sister Conchita. It is also my thought that if the world continues on its path of sin as it is now, the punishment will come.

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