

A GERMAN ENGINEER

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Maximo Foerschler, a German Protestant married to a Spanish Catholic, worked in Spain for many years as an engineer. Since he was a good friend of the Andreu family, he accompanied Father Ramón Andreu on some of Father's visits to Garabandal. Maximo practiced his Protestant Christianity which he inherited from his devout parents and had never considered changing his religion. Here is his testimony excerpted from SHE WENT IN HASTE TO THE MOUNTAIN.

Father Ramon Andreu was beginning the Spiritual Exercises in Loyola on March 19, 1962, and wanted me to take part in them. Frankly, I was reticent to go and wondered what a Protestant would do in a sanctuary like Loyola. For that reason, I decided to return to Garabandal, hoping for some solution to this.

We got there on Saturday, March 17; there were several friends from Madrid in the group as well as my wife and one of my children. We saw the first ecstasy, of Mari Loli, at nine at night and I observed she was almost entirely concerned with my wife, my son, and also myself. To describe this in detail would be an unending story.

At six at night on the following day, Sunday, we all attended the holy rosary, which for me was really moving. When we left the church, I came across Jacinta, whom I had not seen since the early morning of the past October 14-15. I asked her why she hadn't given me the cross to kiss at that time. She didn't answer me. On insisting and telling her that I knew the reason — I thought it was due to my being Protestant — she repeated that she certainly didn't know.

Then I asked when she had last seen the Virgin and she told me, with great sadness, not for five days. "But I petitioned during the holy rosary for you to have a vision this very night. I have to leave tomorrow morning and I need a great sign from the Virgin by means of you," I said to her. Actually, without telling anyone, I had asked that if this were from the Virgin, that she give me an unmistakable and outward demonstration in an ecstasy with Jacinta: that something would happen to me — and to me alone!

At 9:30 at night, Mari Loli went into ecstasy in Jacinta's house to tell her [Jacinta] that at 12:00 at night she would see the Blessed Virgin. And so it happened.



The girl went out into the street in an ecstatic march, and every ten meters she gave the cross to the eight or ten of us who were following her. Later I left the group and the girl went toward the church, where she prayed and returned to the normal state again.

Since nothing in particular happened to me, I thought that Loyola was not my destiny. But Jacinta announced that there was going to be another vision at three in the morning, so I remained and went by her house.



At three on the dot the trance began, and as usual she went out into the street. I accompanied her during her route but finally I separated from the group and went into Loli's house, where they had a tavern.

But toward 3:30 Jacinta came into the tavern in ecstasy and made her way toward me through the many people who were there. She gave me the cross to kiss and made the sign of the cross over me three times. On that occasion no one else had the good fortune of kissing the cross. For me, this was very clearly the sign that I had asked for.

That call of the Blessed Virgin was unmistakable, and on the evening of March 19, I was in Loyola, beginning the Spiritual Exercises in the house of St. Ignatius. I went with the

most lively sentiments, having known the Blessed Virgin for the first time, and I derived the greatest fruits from the days of retreat. On the third day, while at the holy Mass in the Chapel of the Conversion [of St. Ignatius], on seeing that the others who were making the retreat were receiving Jesus (in Holy Communion) and that I was not, I broke down and wept.

*The reader can suspect what happened later. **Maximo Foerschler received baptism according to the rite of the Catholic Church on March 31, 1962, and on the following day, April 1, with great feeling he received his First Holy Communion.** Later he would say:*

For all these special graces that I received from the Virgin, who truly carried me in her arms to the baptismal font, and thus renewed, to the arms of the Lord, I have to be eternally grateful. And I don't know how to give Our Lord and the Blessed Virgin the thanks that they deserve for the miracle worked in me.

A great many things happened to me on further visits to Garabandal which would lengthen this report excessively. I will only mention [this one].

One day, after Mari Loli had come out of ecstasy, she called me aside and told me what the Blessed Virgin had said about me. In spite of the timidity that the girls had and though they were 12 years old at the time, Mari Loli talked a long time to me with the greatest naturalness. She told me about my life, what I had done, and what had happened to me from my early youth until the present date. Absolutely no one in the village could have known all those details (not even my wife!), and many of them I was able to recall after hearing them from the girl.

GARABANDAL JOURNAL • JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2004
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