

Interviews with Conchita - 1

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Conchita Gonzalez Keena, does not grant interviews today and this is understandable. What could she add, at this late date, to what she has already said? But what Conchita has said on previous occasions is still of interest and we begin our series of former interviews with excerpts from one conducted by Dr. Jeronimo Dominguez in May 1973.



Doctor Dominguez: *What did you feel when you saw the Virgin? Were you afraid or was she like a friend?*

Conchita: Whenever she came we felt a great joy. It was as though she had been away on a trip and had just come back.

Doctor: *So how did you feel toward her as to a friend?*

Conchita: I felt toward her as to a friend, or just as if she were my mother.

Doctor: *Did she always appear with a white dress and blue mantle or did she sometimes appear dressed another way?*

Conchita: She always wore a white dress and blue mantle. I remember once we asked her why she dressed this way since the statues we were used to seeing of Our Lady of Mount Carmel showed her dressed in brown. On the

next day, or perhaps it was several days later, I don't remember exactly, she came dressed in brown. After that she always appeared with a white dress and blue mantle.

Doctor: *Did the Virgin wear the scapular on her wrist all the time or just sometimes?*

Conchita: Always! She always wore it.

Doctor: *Do you remember if the Virgin asked you to bring religious objects for her to kiss?*

Conchita: Yes, she used to ask us to bring her religious objects so she could kiss them. She said that those who wore these objects would do their purgatory here on earth. She also said that through these objects miracles or prodigies would be performed. I think she said prodigies not miracles.

Doctor: *Do you recall any miracle or prodigy that resulted from a rosary that the Virgin kissed?*

Conchita: I remember one regarding a medal. A little girl was in a coma and everyone was just waiting for her to die. A lady brought the girl a piece of pine from the tree where the Virgin appeared, and the medal. The girl was completely cured between that night and the following morning. She is now married, has children of her own, and is completely normal.

Doctor: *Did the Virgin ever talk about the rosary?*

Conchita: Every time we saw the Virgin we would say the rosary with her. She taught us how to say it.

Doctor: *How did she teach you? Did she take the lead in praying it?*

Conchita: Yes, she would lead us in praying it and we would repeat her words.

Doctor: *Did she pray it slowly or quickly?*

Conchita: Slowly, very slowly.

Doctor: *Is that the right way to say it?*

Conchita: We thought it was the right way at the time.

Doctor: *Do you remember the rings? Did the Virgin ask for wedding rings to kiss?*

Conchita: Yes. People would give us wedding rings for the Virgin to kiss. Sometimes we would have rings on every finger, then when we saw the Virgin we would give them to her to kiss. She would tell us to put each ring on each owner's finger. She would say: "This ring is for this person." We wouldn't see the rings or the persons, but we followed her directions.

Doctor: *That's unusual because you are in ecstasy looking up. How could you tell if you had the right ring since your hands were full of them?*

Conchita: She would say to us, "not this ring but the one on your little finger" and so on. Let me tell you of a case involving the rings. A couple gave me two rings for the Virgin to kiss. I presented them to the Virgin, but she didn't kiss them. Instead, she gave me a message to be delivered privately to the couple.

Doctor: *What was the message?*

Conchita: The message was that they were not married, but just living together. When I told them they cried. Later they got married.

Doctor: (Showing Conchita a picture of herself in ecstasy giving the crucifix to a man.) *Do you remember these events such as this one with you holding out the crucifix?*

Conchita: I do remember very well that we held out the crucifix for people to kiss. I never knew the people who kissed it. The Virgin would say, "Extend your arm" and the crucifix would be kissed by whomever the Virgin wanted.

Doctor: *Wasn't there something that once happened with a small crucifix?*

Conchita: Yes. One day a man gave me a very small crucifix about the size of a fingernail. When I went to give it to the Virgin to kiss, it fell to the ground and I lost it. When the man came to ask me for the crucifix I told him that I'd lost it, but not to worry because I would ask the Virgin to help me find it again. Several nights later I found it. [During an ecstasy] the Virgin said to me, "Bend down and pick up that object." So I bent down and picked up something that was covered with mud, and it was the crucifix that I had lost.

Doctor: *What did you do with it?*

Conchita: I gave it back to the man.

Doctor: *What do you remember about priests during the time of the apparitions?*

Conchita: I remember that many priests came to the village [to see the events] and many were dressed in civilian clothes. I don't know how, but we always knew who the priests were even if there were a lot of people. One night in particular when we were seeing the Virgin there were a lot of people present. The Virgin told us to hold out our arms [with the crucifix] which we did. When it was over, we learned that all those to whom we had given the crucifix to kiss were priests dressed in civilian clothes.

Doctor: (Showing Conchita a picture of the girls in ecstasy at the village church closed door) *How come you were at the church door?*

Conchita: In the beginning [of the apparitions] we used to enter the church. But then because of the



disturbance made by people who wanted to be first when we held out the crucifix for veneration, the bishop said we could no longer go inside while in ecstasy. From then on, the Virgin never led us inside.

Doctor: *You mean from then on the Virgin only led you up to the door?*

Conchita: Yes.

Doctor: *Was this her way of saying the bishop had to be obeyed?*

Conchita: Yes, I think it was an example of the obedience we owe to the bishop and also to each person to whom we owe obedience.

Doctor: *At what time of the day did the Virgin appear, when there were people present?*

Conchita: She appeared at all hours of the day or night: 11:00 or 12:00 at night, or 1:00 or 5:00 in the morning. There was no definite time. Sometimes there were many people even at five in the morning, or just a few. Sometimes she appeared to us when we were alone with no one else there.

Doctor: *How did you know when she was going to appear at night?*

Conchita: She would alert us by three calls, but please don't ask me about them. It's something I have never been able to understand; that's all I can say.

Doctor: *Was it something you felt inside?*

Conchita: I have never been able to explain it. It was like an immense joy that brings you to a place without your knowing where you are going, only that you have to go there.

Doctor: *During all these spectacular events there were messages. There was one in 1961. Can you repeat what the Virgin said in that first Message?* **Conchita:** Yes. The words of the Virgin are: "We have to do much penance and make many sacrifices. We have to visit the Blessed Sacrament often. Above all, we must be very good. The cup is already filling up. If we don't change a great punishment will come upon us." This is the way I understand it, although the Virgin didn't say it this way. With respect to penance and sacrifice, penance is what we impose on ourselves; sacrifice is giving up things as a situation suggests. For example, when a person scolds us, not to answer them back. Or if we receive a blow, to offer it to God. For me this is self imposed penance and sacrifice.

Doctor: *On the subject of penance and sacrifice, wasn't there an incident regarding a piece of gum?*

Conchita: Yes. The day of the last apparition on November 13, 1965, I had a piece of gum in my mouth. The moment I saw the Virgin, I stopped chewing it and lodged it against the inside of my cheek. But she said, "Why don't you get rid of that gum and offer it as a sacrifice for me?" [Note: In an account of this apparition much closer to the actual event itself that Conchita wrote for Father Jose Maria Alba, S.J., on December 10, 1965, the words of Our Lady are more accurately recounted: "Why don't you get rid of your chewing gum and offer it up as a sacrifice *for the glory of my Son.*"]

So I took the gum out of my mouth. I understood from this that the Virgin was not asking for big sacrifices, but small ones so that we can continually offer them out of love for her.





Conchita in 1964 with village children on the church portico.

Doctor: *So little sacrifices are good when made in the presence of God. After all, gum is not bad, right?*

Conchita: Not at all, but giving it up is an act of love for God.

Doctor: *The Virgin also said in the Message that above all we have to be good. What do you think she meant by that?*

Conchita: I don't know what the Virgin meant. I understand it to be a life lived moment by moment offering everything to God. Living like a Christian the way our conscience tells us is what I think she meant.

Doctor: *So everyone can be good.*

Conchita: Sure. Everyone in the practice of their religion, in their environment, in their family, their job, knows how to be good because each person has his own conscience and God speaks to each one through their conscience.

Doctor: *Each man and woman knows what is right or wrong whether it's here [in New York] or a little village like Garabandal.*

Conchita: I am sure that each person knows when they do something good or bad.

Doctor: *The Message then was the important thing in all these apparitions. What have you done or what have you tried to do to live the Message?* **Conchita:** What would give the Virgin great happiness is a very difficult thing for me. That is to live each moment of the day doing everything for God.

Doctor: *Do you think you and I are living the Message?*

Conchita: I think I am, but you have to answer for yourself.

Doctor: *You work as a nurse. [Note: At the time of this interview, Conchita was a nurse in Dr. Dominguez's clinic in New York.] Do you fulfill the Message in that capacity and if so how?*

Conchita: I try to by doing my work to the best of my abilities and by treating the patients the way I should.

Doctor: *How about a housewife with three or four children who is busy all day? Can she fulfill the Message?*

Conchita: Surely, according to the perfection in which she accomplishes her duties offering all her actions to God.

Doctor: *Offering to God all the little things she does during the day. So it's not what you do but how you do*

it.

Conchita: How you do it, that is true.

Doctor: *How about a person working in an office?*

Conchita: You can fulfill the Message anywhere. You can always be good and offer praise to God.



PHOTO: Conchita in 2000.

Doctor: *One of the things you have done in New York is give out scapulars. Why do you do that? Do you like giving out scapulars in the office and on the streets?*

Conchita: Ever since I was a little girl I've worn the scapular. It's a devotion my mother taught me. But more than that, I wear it because whenever the Virgin appeared, she had the scapular on her wrist.

Doctor: *All that you have said so far deals with the first Message. Wasn't there another Message on June 18, 1965? Can you tell us about that one?*

Conchita: Certainly. The Virgin's Message delivered by Saint Michael said: "Because my Message of October 18, 1961, had not been fulfilled and that the world didn't know about it, I'm telling you that this is the last one. Before the cup was filling up. Now it is flowing over. Many priests, bishops and cardinals are on the road to perdition and

are taking many souls with them. Each day less and less importance is being given to the Eucharist. You should use all your efforts to avoid God's wrath. If you sincerely ask for pardon, He will forgive you. I your mother, through the mediation of Saint Michael the Archangel, ask you to correct your ways. You should sacrifice more. Think of the passion of Jesus.

Doctor: *What do you think about the statement that cardinals, bishops and priests are on the road to perdition?*

Conchita: I think every day the Virgin appeared she mentioned priests and that we should pray for them. We never understood why. For us priests were like saints because we never had many come to our village. It was considered a privilege whenever one came.

Regarding bishops and cardinals, we thought it very strange, but we would repeat it the way she said it.

Doctor: (Showing Conchita a picture of her receiving Communion from Saint Michael) *Here you are, but we are not able to see the Host. The angel brought you Communion many times, isn't that right? Do you remember how many times?*

Conchita: Not that many, maybe forty times. Usually there was a priest in the village and the angel only gave us Communion when there was no priest. Regarding Communion, the Virgin taught us the value and the importance of the Eucharist. After the apparitions started, we never missed a day without receiving.

Doctor: *Since only priests can consecrate, did you ever ask the Virgin where the angel got the Hosts?*

Conchita: Yes, we did ask because a priest told us to. The Virgin said that the angel took the already-consecrated Hosts from tabernacles on earth.

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Interviews with Conchita - 2

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Continuing our series of interviews with Conchita, is one that was conducted in the early 1980s by Monsignor Francisco Garmendia, Auxiliary Bishop of New York.



PHOTO: Conchita in 1965 at the cloister of Santillana del Mar.

Bishop Garmendia: *Among those who love you — and everybody loves you, Conchita! (and as Christians we should all love one another) — there is a very dear gentleman in Santander who knows you and who works very hard for Garabandal and who has all the data on the apparitions. His name is Placido. Do you remember him?*

Conchita: I love him very much. I remember that he defended Garabandal and now is an important witness. He is one of those chosen by the Virgin. There are not many that from the beginning have persevered with Garabandal. Therefore, I say to Placido: "Congratulations, because you still persevere with the Virgin."

Bishop: *How did you like the audio tape sent to you by your friend Placido? Did you understand it?* [Editor's note: Placido Ruiloba was a Santander

businessman who frequently went up to Garabandal to witness the apparitions. He always brought with him a tape recorder and has some forty audio tapes that he recorded during the time of the apparitions of the visionaries praying, singing, and speaking with their Vision while in ecstasy. It was a copy of one of these tapes that Placido sent to Conchita.]

Conchita: I understood about the rosaries, but not the conversation with the Virgin. I understood only a few things but it brought back good memories.

Bishop: *It brought back good memories to you?*

Conchita: Yes, and I plan to listen to it several more times to see if I can understand more.

Bishop: *It takes you back to your younger days, eh? How beautiful the old days must have been. They no doubt rekindle your interior life and I suppose you begin to recall many things.*

Conchita: When I listened to it, it was like listening to another Conchita talking to the Virgin. It didn't feel like it was me.

Bishop: *Didn't you recognize your own voice?*

Conchita: No, it didn't seem like me. It sounded like a different Conchita. I don't know why.

Bishop: *Would you like to hear some more of the tape?*

Conchita: Of course.

Bishop: *Very well.*

Conchita: I believe the Virgin is all love, the greatest and most beautiful. She lovingly comes from heaven to tell us what we must do and to remind us to do it. She is a Mother and she shows it by coming to see us.

Bishop: *Does the general public have doubts about the apparitions?*

Conchita: The Virgin told us that before the Miracle many people will stop believing.

Bishop: *Have you thought much about people stopping believing?*

Conchita: No, I haven't thought about it.

Bishop: *So you believe in the Virgin blindly and you always refer us to what she told you. There's another subject I'd like to bring up, Conchita, and that is Holy Communion. I understand that the Virgin told you girls that if there were priests present the Angel would not give you Communion; that the Angel would only give Communion when there were no priests present. However, I understand that on the day of the Miracle of the [Visible] Communion there were some thirty priests in Garabandal. Can you clarify this?*

Conchita: The Virgin never told us that the Angel would not come if there were priests in the village. It is the Angel who did not come when there were priests in the village. Only that day, the Angel came even though there were priests in the village. I can't explain why.

Bishop: *So, the Virgin did not categorically tell you the Angel will give you Communion only when there are no priests in the village, did she?*

Conchita: No. Because whatever the Virgin says happens just as she says it.

Bishop: *Can you tell us, Conchita, who ordered you to write your diary?*

Conchita: The Bishop of Leon.

Bishop: *So it was the Bishop of Leon.*

Conchita: The Bishop was in the house of Señor [Emilio] del Valle, and through this gentleman he told me to begin to write my diary. He bought me a bunch of notebooks.

Bishop: *The Bishop bought you the notebooks?*

Conchita: No, Señor del Valle did.

Bishop: *Oh, a layman.*

Conchita: Yes, this gentleman was a close friend of the Bishop of Leon.

Bishop: *And what did the Bishop of Leon have to do with all of this?*

Conchita: I don't know.

Bishop: *How did he come to appear on the Garabandal scene?*

Conchita: I don't know. The Bishop came to the house of Señor del Valle.

Bishop: *Was Mr. del Valle from Garabandal?*

Conchita: No, Emilio del Valle was from Reinososa, but lived in Leon.

Bishop: *So the Bishop ordered you to write the diary. Is there only one diary or several others?*

Conchita: The one that has been published is the one the Bishop ordered me to write. Then I have my own private diary and the nun from the school I went to has another.

Bishop: *Mother Nieves?*

Conchita: Yes, Mother Nieves. I think something was published from that diary, but it was meant to be private.

Bishop: *As for the present Bishop of Santander, is he going to have a special sign before the Miracle? Will it be something that happens in nature or something in general?*

Conchita: The Virgin said that she was going to send proof to the Bishop of Santander so that he will allow priests to go to Garabandal.

Bishop: *What kind of proof?*

Conchita: She didn't say. This sign of the truth of the apparitions will be something private for whomever is the Bishop of Santander at the time of the Miracle.

Bishop: *So, it will be for the one who is Bishop at the time of the Miracle?*

Conchita: Yes, he will receive a sign.

Bishop: *So the Bishop will receive a sign and he will know that Garabandal is true. This is clear now. You know, Conchita, that we are attracted to Garabandal because we love the Virgin. We know she utilizes humble people and means like at Lourdes and Fatima and other apparitions. It has been said that the Virgin told you the Miracle will be on a Thursday. Is this true?*

Conchita: Yes. The Virgin said it will be on a Thursday, and she also gave the day, month and year.

Bishop: *Are you sure? Did you check it on the calendar?*

Conchita: No, I didn't have to, because she told me the Thursday, the day, month and year.

Bishop: *I am so glad to hear this. I had been told that you knew it was to be a Thursday, and began to guess at the dates. But the Virgin told you the exact date, the exact month and the exact year. No one need have any doubts now. If everything in life were so perfectly clear there would be no problems. I heard you were in Rome.*

Conchita: Cardinal Ottaviani sent me a letter through Princess Cecilia de Bourbon-Parma and I went to Rome with my mother.

PHOTO: When Conchita was summoned to Rome by Cardinal Ottaviani, she made the trip in 1966 accompanied by Fr. Luis Luna, Princess Cecilia de Bourbon-Parma and Conchita's mother, Aniceta, on the right..



Bishop: *I don't want to press you, but what happened?*

Conchita: They interviewed me for two hours and told me that it would be better to keep secret all that was said. I don't remember now all the questions they asked me, but I remember it was for two hours.

Bishop: *Can you tell us your impressions of Rome? I imagine a girl from Garabandal, a remote mountain village, would have a lot to say about Rome, right?*

Conchita: No, not really. I went there because they called me. They asked me questions and I answered them; that was all. After seeing the Virgin I find it difficult to be impressed by Rome.

Bishop: *So the Virgin is more beautiful than all Rome.*

Conchita: Yes, that is true. However, now I would like to return and see the sights. I'm somewhat more curious now.

Bishop: *Would you like to visit the Holy Father?*

Conchita: Yes.

Bishop: *I hope someday you can return to Rome and visit the Holy Father. Nothing is impossible. We all have unfulfilled wishes, but if you want to go to Rome perhaps it will happen. Are there any other relationships between Rome, the Holy Father and the Miracle that you would like to talk about?*

Conchita: Yes. The Virgin told us something related to the Holy Father, and it was that before the Miracle there would be only three more Popes.

Bishop: *I want this to be very clear to all who hear this tape. Conchita was very precise. The Virgin told you that before the Miracle...?*

Conchita: At the time, Pope John XXIII was living. The Virgin said, "Three more Popes are left; there will be only three more Popes." She was then speaking about the end of the times.

Bishop: *So the Virgin spoke to you about the end of the times?* [Editor's note: This is not to be confused with *the end of time*, but rather refers to the end of our times. How that will happen, what it entails, and what will follow is not known at this time.]

Conchita: Yes.

Bishop: *So after John XXIII came Paul VI, John Paul I and then John Paul II. So look out, the noose is tightening! It's the Virgin who is speaking.*

Conchita: The Virgin was talking about the end of the times. She also spoke to us about France. I don't know



if you remember but it was being said that a world war would break out in 1962. At the time everyone was afraid including me. Then the Virgin appeared and addressing our concern said: "Don't be afraid, there will not be another world war."

Bishop: *So she said there would not be another world war. There have been local conflagrations, and much has been said about a coming world war. The situation is very tense, but a world war would be the end of nations.*

Conchita: I don't remember any more. I would like to add, however, with reference to Rome, that some priests or people are putting too much pressure on the Church to approve Garabandal. I believe it would be better that this be left in the hands of God. Let them speak about and spread the Message of the Virgin, but leave the rest in the hands of God.

Bishop: *You caution against rushing things and speculating. You prefer that all be left in the hands of God. You have complete confidence in Him.*

Conchita: Yes. Before, when I was so concerned about whether Rome would believe me or not, the Lord Himself told me: "Don't worry about being believed, especially in Rome. I will do everything." I would like to tell this to all those who want the Bishop and Rome to hurry ahead in this matter.

Bishop: *People are always looking for new things. I agree with you; let God and the Blessed Virgin handle it in their own way. You aren't searching for great things, you are simply living a Christian life just as the Blessed Virgin said to.*

Conchita: Yes, every day, and waiting for the Miracle.

Bishop: *Each day you live it.*

Conchita: Yes.

Bishop: *That is what the Gospels and Our Lady say; to live the Christian life every day. This is what you mean, right?*

Conchita: Yes. Live every moment of the day with true faith and devotion.

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Interviews with Conchita - 3

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This final interview with Conchita in our series was conducted by Father Francis Benac, S.J., in June of 1978.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ECSTASIES

Father Benac: How high was the Virgin when she appeared to you?

Conchita: At times we could give her the crucifix to kiss, but we always had to look up to see her.

Benac: In some photographs you are seen lifting one another.

Conchita: Yes, because sometimes we couldn't reach her when she was above the level of our faces.

Benac: Were you aware of what you were doing?

Conchita: Yes, we were quite aware and when doing this the other one was weightless.

Benac: Is it true that Our Lady kissed you before her departure? Did you feel her kissing you?

Conchita: Surely we felt it, just as one feels when kissed by another person.

Benac: Our Lady often appeared to all four of you at night. Do you think she chose that time for any special reason?

Conchita: I would say that there was no special motive other than, as she said, it was during the nighttime that so many sins were committed.

PENANCE AND SACRIFICE

Benac: Did Our Lady ask all four of you to offer sacrifices?

Conchita: For us, we were already making sacrifices. We had to work the whole day in the fields, and then when it came time for bed, we couldn't sleep because the Virgin had already given us the Hamadas [call that preceded her appearances]. It was the same for all the people in the village and our own families. Surely those were years of much sacrifice, laboring by day and spending the night waiting for Our Lady.

Benac: Regarding penance, did she refer to anything specific?

Conchita: I remember the first day I put on a penitential belt; she told me that this was not what she wanted, but rather that we should accept daily all things as they came to us and offer them up with love and faith, especially with regard to the obedience we owed to our mother and all other things, you see, which children are expected to do.

THE PRIESTHOOD

Benac: During Our Lady's many visits, what did she request most frequently from the four of you?

Conchita: She always insisted that we pray for priests. We couldn't understand why. It sounded so strange to hear her make this request because one day she had told us: "If you ever see a priest and an angel, greet the



priest first and then the angel!" It was by this, that we understood that it was God [represented by the priest] who came, and so we could not understand her persistent request for prayers for priests.

FATHER Luis ANDREU

Benac: When did you know that Fr. Luis Andreu had a sort of share in your ecstasies and the vision of the miracle?

Conchita: (in a soft voice) I don't remember.

Benac: But you said later that the Virgin had told you that he had died of joy?

Conchita: I know she said this, but I don't remember when.

Benac: Is it true that Our Lady told you that Fr. Luis (after his death) would come with her and that he would talk to all four of you?

Conchita: Yes, and we could hear him speak in his natural voice.

Benac: Did he tell you anything personal for his brother Ramon?

Conchita: I don't remember. What I do remember is that he taught us the Hail Mary in Greek. We immediately repeated it and the people heard us say it.

Benac: Do you still remember it? Can you recite something?

Conchita: (Without hesitation, Conchita recited the first sentence of the Hail Mary) *Hcdre Maria Keharitomene, O Kirios Metasu eulogemene...* I don't remember any more.

Benac: You have also been quoted as having said that Fr. Luis Andreu's body would be found incorrupt after the Miracle.

Conchita: Yes. The Virgin said that after the Miracle Father's body would be found incorrupt. I know that when his grave was opened to transfer the remains to Loyola, the body was decomposed.

Benac: What was your reaction to that?

Conchita: Let me say again that it was the Virgin who told me that after the Miracle his body would be found incorrupt. Now how that will happen I don't know.

Benac: But, when Our Lady said this, she would have known that the body had already decomposed.

Conchita: Yes, for she knows everything. Perhaps his brother [Father Ramon Andreu] knows more.

PHOTO: **SACRIFICE** Conchita waiting up for the Vision.

VISIT TO ROME

Benac: Regarding your visits to Rome, who called you there the first time?

Conchita: I don't quite remember, but I'm sure it was Cardinal Ottaviani. I know that some messages were delivered to our house saying that I had an invitation from Rome. I think the invitation was from Cardinal Ottaviani.

Benac: So, you met Cardinal Ottaviani in Rome?

Conchita: I think it was Cardinal Ottaviani and other bishops, but I don't remember exactly.

Benac: There has been much speculation about your meeting with the Holy Father and I have the words of



Canon Porro about it. Could you tell us if his statement is accurate?

Conchita: I cannot speak about that [Note: Conchita was sworn to secrecy about what was discussed in her meeting with Paul VI.].

Benac: On the cover of Sanchez Ventura's book, THE APPARITIONS OF GARABANDAL, Pope Paul VI is quoted as having said: "I bless you and with me the whole Church blesses you." Are those words correct?

Conchita: Oh yes! He said exactly those words.

Benac: Could they be heard all around?

Conchita: Oh yes. Everyone around us could hear them.

Benac: Was any cardinal or bishop close to the Holy Father when he passed in front of you?

Conchita: Yes, there was a bishop by the name (N.N.) who I felt did his very best to prevent the Holy Father from coming close to me. As we stood watching the Pope advance on his *gestatoria* (chair mounted on two parallel, horizontal poles carried on the shoulders of men), the Holy Father noticed a friend of his standing by me, but that bishop tried to stand between the Pope and us. Eventually he did come closer to us and then spoke those words to me.

Benac: Regarding the Pope, I understand that Our Lady said he would see the Miracle from wherever he was. Is that correct? Did she refer to the present Pope?

Conchita: No. When I said that, Pope John XXIII was reigning. She did not say which Pope, just simply "the Pope."

THE SECOND MESSAGE

Benac: Referring to the Second Message, where did you receive it and when did you write it down?

Conchita: I received the Message at *la calleja* [the sunken lane leading up to the Pines where the first apparitions took place]. After St. Michael gave it to me, I went home with all the people following me. While everyone waited outside, I went in and I don't think it took me more than a minute to write it down. I would like to add something here. At the time of our denials [the Blessed Virgin told the visionaries in advance (1961) that they would doubt and deny their visions once they stopped seeing her] I remember when I met with the bishop to tell him that the apparitions were not true, I did tell him: "I am sure the Message was given to me by the angel." Even when I felt the apparitions were not true, the Message was engraved in my mind.

Benac: Do you remember this very well?

Conchita: Oh, yes! It's what impressed me most even after the denials, when I would ask myself: If the apparitions weren't true then who gave me that Message?

Benac: I understand there are two versions of the Message. How many copies did you make?

Conchita: In the first version I wrote "many priests are on the way to perdition."

Benac: Why didn't you mention cardinals, bishops and priests?

Conchita: For me to add cardinals and bishops was too strong and I didn't dare say it. As I was writing the Message, I said to myself: I don't feel that I am disobeying the angel since bishops and cardinals are priests. Later, when I wrote out the Message again, I felt I should write it as St. Michael told me, with cardinals and bishops as well. I know I made two copies, but on the first one I only wrote "priests."

Benac: I understand that Father Marcelino Andreu made the first translation into English. Did he write the complete version or did he say only priests?

Conchita: I don't know, but I feel that he wrote only priests and I think Father Luna made the translation into French.

Benac: Do you recall any ecclesiastical authorities reproaching you because of that sentence?

Conchita: Oh yes, many, but only individually and not officially. One priest told me I would be canonically excommunicated for having spoken about priests that way.

Benac: But an ordinary priest obviously has no power to do this.

Conchita: Perhaps he said it to frighten me. And well, yes, it was terrible since the people in my village used to identify a priest with something divine. When one came to the village it was as if God Himself came. This was how we thought of our priests and it was hard for me to write that [part in the] Message. Back in the village in those days, nothing of what is happening with priests today was heard of. This is why they called me a liar and said they were going to kill me.

Benac: Did the Blessed Virgin, or Saint Michael on her behalf, specifically ask you on any occasion to spread the Message?

Conchita: As far as I'm concerned, this is the only reason for the apparitions: the Message — for me and for everyone.

Benac: Wasn't that why the Virgin complained at the beginning of her second Message that her first Message had not been made known?

Conchita: Yes, exactly.

Benac: Then, could we say that this is your special mission, to practice and help others to practice the Message?

Conchita: Surely, otherwise why would she have come from heaven to earth.

Benac: Are you happy to hear the news of the extraordinary way the Message is spreading all over the world in spite of so many difficulties?

Conchita: Yes, and I receive very encouraging letters from people saying how they practice the Message and try to spread it.

SAINT MICHAEL'S CHAPEL

Benac: There is one delicate question I would like to ask you and it's about the chapel in honor of St. Michael. Did Our Lady ever ask for this?

Conchita: Yes, Our Lady told us that she wanted a chapel to be built at the Pines but after the Miracle. Perhaps Our Lady may not have been pleased at the present chapel which was put up before the Miracle [Note: the present pre-fabricated structure was literally put up over night around 1968].

PHOTO: Conchita and Patrick on their wedding day, May 26, 1973, with Dr. and Gladys Dominguez and sons. [Young Jerome, on the right, later became a New York Police Department special units officer and died heroically on September 11, 2001, saving the lives of others during the Trade Center disaster.]



Benac: Did Our Lady ever ask, as she did at other apparitions, that a shrine be built in her honor?

Conchita: No. She only asked that a chapel be built in honor of St. Michael.

Benac: How would you interpret this gesture of Our Lady?

Conchita: I didn't interpret it in any way. I always accepted all that she said, but now I realize and think that because St. Michael is God's defender against Satan, the Blessed Virgin thinks people should have much devotion to him — but I really don't know.

FUTURE LIFE

Benac: Did the Virgin ever tell you anything about your future?

Conchita: No. I often asked her but she never spoke to us about our private lives. If I asked her any questions in that regard, she did not answer. I repeatedly told her that when I became 15 years old I would go to the convent and become a nun at 16, but she never answered me or the other girls.

Benac: But you did feel an urge to join the religious life.

Conchita: Yes, I wanted to enter a convent thinking that after having seen the Virgin the normal thing to do was become a nun (here she smiled sweetly).

Benac: How was it then that you followed a different course?

Conchita: After a locution with Our Lord [at a convent school in Pamplona], I don't remember the entire locution, but I do remember Him telling me that I was there doing my own will and not His. From this and the rest of what He said to me then, I thought my vocation was not in a convent. After that, thinking that perhaps Our Lord meant that my place was not there at that particular convent, I thought of joining some cloistered nuns. I used to go for 15 days or even a month for recollection and had felt a strong attraction to that way of life. Strangely however, each time I thought of joining, an afterthought followed telling me that, I would not be able to persevere.

Benac: Why?

Conchita: I would presume that because I did not have a true vocation as Our Lord had indicated.

Benac: After this did you feel attracted to the married life?

Conchita: No, I never thought of marriage either.

Benac: You told me that Patrick, your husband, has helped you a great deal in your spiritual life. How is that?

Conchita: I can think of no other person in the world who has given me such a fine example. And I'm not saying that just because he's my husband but because he is that.

