

ESTHER GONZALEZ CUENCA

As told to Santiago Lanus (*pueblodemaria.com*) • Translation by Pablo A. Gonzalez Herrera

Esther Gonzalez Cuenca is a 94-year-old woman who lives in Cadiz (city that lies in the south of Spain). She visited Garabandal early during the apparitions with Aurora Martínez del Cerro, who was also from Cadíz. Her account bears some similarities with those of other witnesses, but she emphasizes some aspects of the events.

I was in the village at the beginning of the apparitions. I was a relative of Loli and lodged next to the church with the seven members of my family from Cadíz. I remember being on the very first day in Jacinta's kitchen. The pilgrims were placing on a table rosaries and other religious objects that were going to be given to the Virgin to kiss. I was wearing a watch with a little religious medal attached to it. Thinking that it was just a watch Jacinta didn't want to take it but when she saw the medal she took the watch with her. Once the Virgin kissed it the girl asked the Vision who the owner was. Then she immediately came over to me behind a lot of people in a kitchen full of pilgrims.



I witnessed many unbelievable occurrences like seeing the girls walking backwards—that was something truly unbelievable. They also prayed the Rosary and on doing so they were perfectly synchronized. A priest who was there verified that although they didn't hold a rosary they never made a mistake when it came to changing the mystery. There were many impressive things like that.

I spent around a month there at the beginning of the apparitions. Seeing them walking backwards without looking at the ground and eyes fixed upwards was always a source of astonishment to me for they never fell down. Onlookers were also amazed. There was also that inexplicable change of weight. Loli's father gave a pilgrim permission to lift her but he was unable; he couldn't get her off the ground. That pilgrim said that she seemed to be "screwed to the ground"; that was the expression he used. Apart from that, they were pricked with needles; people wanted to be sure that their trances were real.

Jacinta in ecstasy holds up a holy card to be kissed by her Vision.

My impression when they were not in ecstasy was that they were normal girls, playing like normal children usually do, running up and down, but when all of a sudden they fell into ecstasy everything was different. You could see each one coming from different places and from different distances, and all arriving at the same time. They fell into ecstasy in the same instant, sometimes crashing to the ground with tremendous force and not showing the slightest sign of pain. On another occasion a lady lost her rosary. The Virgin was then asked about that, and She specified the exact location. So many things to ponder.

Today, as a very old lady, I sometimes have some doubts but certainty remain about my experiences, especially that of the watch, which was so perplexing to me. I remember also what happened to Father Andreu; he saw the Miracle and a few hours later he died. □

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