

# JORGE FERNANDEZ DIAZ

**This testimony was given in the Equestrian Society of Barcelona by Don Jorge Fernández Díaz, Spanish Interior Minister between 2011 and 2016, during the presentation of the doctoral thesis on Garabandal by Father Jose Luis Saavedra.**

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**W**e are here to talk about Garabandal. The main question is: what's going on regarding Garabandal? Believers know very well: there is no pure chance, but Divine Providence at work. This is what Saint John Paul II said after his assassination attempt on May 13th 1981: "In the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences." John Paul II meant that everything is guided by Divine Providence; nothing is fortuitous. And he went on, saying: "It was necessary that the attempt on my life took place on the same day as the Fatima anniversary so that the Pope and the Church would pay further attention to the Fatima message." I think he said that to Vittorio Messori in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* and repeated something similar in *Memory and Identity*.

Anyway, we are not here by mere coincidence. Everyone of us knows the reason to be present in this conference, but I would go as far as to say that we all share here a common trait: a deep love for Our Lady.

As you probably know, I am back in public life after the heart attack I suffered fifteen days ago. My wife Asun and I had travelled to Madrid from Barcelona because we had been invited to the premiere of the film *Garabandal, Only God Knows* the following day, on Friday. I was asked to bring to the premiere somebody from the Civil Guard for as you know the main character in the film is Juan Alvarez Seco, a brigadier belonging to that military corps. Eventually Colonel Diego Perez de los Cobos attended the premiere with his wife and daughter and they were so enthusiastic that he told me that they were insisting on visiting Garabandal as soon as possible. And that's not surprising. The film attracts people because it is a marvelous film. When you learn that it was made in twenty-seven days by a team of volunteers, that no one was being paid for it, on the contrary, everyone had to pay even for their own accommodation. The prayer was intense that surrounded every scene while it was being shot and the admiration when you see the result increasing correspondingly.



The Director, by the way, is a Servant of the Home of the Mother, Father Brian.

To be honest, I was waiting for a documentary done with a lot of love and kindness for Our Lady though quite unheard of outside Church boundaries. Instead, I enjoyed a full-blown, wonderful movie I have seen

since then four times. But curiously enough, not in a movie theater because I suffered the heart attack by the door of the cinema when I was about to go in. Was that mere coincidence? In such a situation one can choose between being optimistic or being pessimistic, depending on one's vision of life. I underwent emergency surgery and here I am fifteen days later. Somebody told me that it was evident that the Virgin of Garabandal had saved my life.

Talking about coincidences, I went up to Garabandal on May 13th, on the same day of Pope Francis's visit to Fatima. During the time I spent in Garabandal somebody mentioned the possibility of giving conferences about Fatima. Since then I have already talked about Fatima in a number of venues, in Murcia, in different places in Madrid. Anyway, it

was after my visit to Garabandal that I was asked by Javier Paredes (who plays a bishop in the film) to be interviewed in a TV program that the Servants of the Home of the Mother have in their TV station in Zurita (a little village 50 kilometers away from Garabandal). Could it be a mere coincidence that I was there on Sunday June 18th, the anniversary of the first apparition in Garabandal? When I arrived there, the prioress of the Servants, mother Ana, told me: “Don Jorge, it is Our Mother who brought you here!” Then she said, “Do you know we have made a film about Garabandal?” This is how I came to know about the film.

Unfortunately, I must say that the bad reputation that Garabandal had from the beginning stemmed from the lack of serious investigation into the facts. This was plainly admitted by Doctor Morales, the president of the commission appointed to look into the events during the apparitions, in a conference given in the Ateneo of Santander in 1983, where he revealed the bias against the apparitions with which the commission worked, and retracted his formerly negative assessment.

So we must admit that though it is sad to say, there was no good will when it came to examine Garabandal. What was the reason for that? Well, when an apparition of Our Lady occurs it is not for fun, because She has something to say to men and women of that particular time. Of course, She respects our free will, and as He came unto His own and His own received Him not, the same happens with His mother, She came but Her own did not receive Her. And what saddens me most is that there was no serious effort to reach the truth. That’s my view and I know it is debatable but I have come to that conclusion based on facts. Because what the Virgin did in Garabandal defies any human logic. She appeared in 1961-65 when modernism began to wreak havoc within the Church but almost nobody was aware of that. She came to Garabandal and said: “Many cardinals, many bishops and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them.” That was too much for many, who did their best to put Garabandal out of sight. However, when the apparition is authentic, the *sensus fidei* gets the upper hand and the apparitions are eventually approved by the Church. I’m sure that will be the case with Garabandal. To my mind, there has been no apparition in history more ill-treated than Garabandal, but more than fifty years have elapsed and here we are. Don't forget by the way that the middle category in which Garabandal now resides— *non constat supernaturalitate*—is not a negative category but rather the only place for such events when a final decision has not yet been made. The other two categories in which the Church places private revelations are as follows: *constat de supernaturalitate* (Guadalupe, Fatima), and *constat de non supernaturalitate*, that is, the events are not of supernatural origin.



Fr. Saavedra

Be that as it may, in this Fatima anniversary, two significant events have taken place. On the one hand, the doctoral thesis on Garabandal by Father Jose Luis Saavedra, who was granted *cum laude* in the University of Navarra. I was present when he defended it and I was allowed by the president of the tribunal to say some words. On the other hand, the release of *Garabandal, Only God Knows* has also been an event worthy of notice, for its success has exceeded all expectations. Nobody would have imagined that more than 200,000 moviegoers have seen the film so far. Anyway, the fact that the doctoral thesis and the film coincides in time means to me that Heaven has decided that the time has come to move ahead regarding Garabandal.

Besides all this, there is a strange link between the apparitions and the United States, and that is evident not only in the number of pilgrims from that country, but also in the fact that three of the visionaries married Americans. Furthermore, it is well-known that Garabandal has on its side a number of saints, the most significant being Padre Pio but also Mother Teresa of Calcutta, who was Conchita’s friend and Saint Jose Maria Escriva, who visited Garabandal three times.

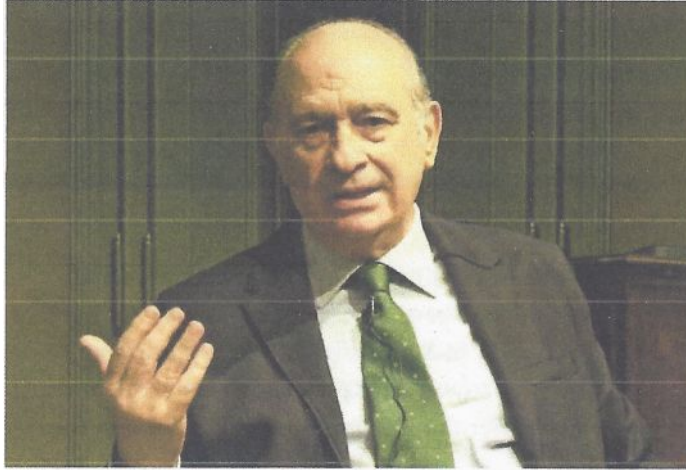
Finally, and most importantly, Garabandal is essentially linked to the Eucharist. You can see eucharistic symbols on many of its houses built centuries ago and the apparitions and the formal Messages revolve around the Eucharist at a time when this mystery was attacked by modernists and Paul VI had to write the Encyclical *Mysterium Fidei* to promote Eucharistic devotion and to reassert the Catholic faith in the Eucharist. By the way, the formal Messages are very straightforward because in Heaven things are unambiguous: the Eucharist, to think about the passion of Jesus, to amend our lives.

But Garabandal has also an eschatological side to it: the Warning, the Miracle, and the Chastisement are very much linked to the apparitions, though at the same time have attracted many people only interested in the sensational.

As a layperson I have to insist on what I said during the public hearing of Father Saavedra’s thesis: we have a

right to know the truth. If the Mother of God appeared in Garabandal, that shouldn't be taken as a piece of trivia to talk lightly about. I think that the thesis and the movie are going to achieve the feat of making Garabandal's events known worldwide.

I repeat this again: what happened up there defies any human logic. The Church should move ahead now, first setting up a new commission, then plowing through the documents, dredging up the facts. It is so evident that Garabandal is the continuation of Fatima! Even Our Lady alluded to it: 'Ate San Sebastiao d'Hespanha!' ("Until San Sebastian of Spain!") □



*Don Jorge Fernández Díaz*

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