

JOSE ANTONIO JULIANI

Translation by Pablo A, Gonzalez Herrera

An early eyewitness to the apparitions, José Antonio Juliani has written a book in which he put together what he lived in Garabandal from the notes he took at the time.

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Above, Loli (top) and Jacinta after an ecstatic fall in the village church

A month after the beginning of the apparitions I went up to Garabandal, spending there a month and a half more or less. From the very first day I took notes of everything I witnessed. It was August 1961. During the time I spent there I stayed in Piedad's house who was like a mother to me.

As the Bishop of Santander had issued a statement declaring that priests should abstain from going up to Garabandal, I was asked by a priest in Santander to write down everything regarding the events that were taking place. So I did, and following his instructions, I sent my reports to the Bishopric through Don Valentin, the parish priest, who subsequently was in charge of handing it over to the Chancery of Santander. Besides, that same priest had told the families of the seers about what I was doing so I was able to get to know them quite well eventually enjoying a good relationship with their parents and brothers, especially with Conchita's brother.

So every morning, either in Loli's house or in the village's little tavern, I put in writing everything I had witnessed the day before. The girls were quite impressed with my daily task. On one occasion, while in ecstasy, they even told the apparition: "Jose Antonio is always writing."

Though we talked a lot, I never asked them about what was happening and I restrained myself to gather all the data. I was afraid that I could influence the girls in some way. On one occasion, answering to my question, I was told by a girl in ecstasy to go on with my task provided that I should send the notes to the Bishop and make known my work. I obeyed the first part of that command because I used to send my reports to the Bishop on a daily basis



Jose Antonio



through Don Valentin but the bit about making everything known I didn't comply with until I published the book.

Of course, I personally witnessed many things, though sometimes it was impossible to witness everything because their ecstasies took the seers in different directions. However, in spite of that, on those occasions they were heard talking to each other as if they were close together.

As an eyewitness I was struck by the postures they began to adopt in their ecstatic falls. These postures were beautiful to behold, like sculptures. They cannot be recalled ever to have adopted postures that were indecorous. I realized then that little by little the supernatural phenomena were

getting more complex, to me that was something similar to the way the mystics use to describe their ascent to God through their experiences more and more complex to understand.

Anyway, it was very impressive to see them walk without looking at the ground with the eyes always fixed upwards, the head raised presenting the face to the heavens in a very awkward posture nearly all the time but with a sweet expression on their faces by day or by night, on foot or kneeling forwards and backwards. Onlookers were amazed because everything was extraordinary, nothing was normal.

There was also the fact that the Virgin told the seers that She was Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The four girls coincided in saying that the Virgin wore a the Virgin of Mount Carmel as they knew Her brown. How was it possible? Well, according there, they were describing Our of Mount Mount Carmel itself. And this was completely quite conclusive that the little ones were not simple, with that spontaneous simplicity so Garabandal, quite isolated at the time from the had to make a stiff climb starting at Cosio but you had to go up on foot. At Garabandal, there nothing to do there.

As I said before I witnessed up there many ecstasy, only half her body resting on the impossible posture. I also remember a friend tried with me to move one of the girls while in were unable to move her, but at the same time the greatest ease.

During the ecstasies, the seers always Virgin which they offered to those present.

opportunity and began to load the four girls with religious objects to give to the Virgin to kiss. The Virgin kissed everything and they were all returned precisely to their owners. It was incredible; they never made a mistake! I remember once Loli who was at home when she fell in ecstasy. She then asked the apparition, "Should I give it to her?" Then, her head raised upwards, she walked through the village among crowds of people whom the children had not seen or known beforehand and returned the religious object to the owner. It was always like that. They made no mistake without ever looking at the object that they returned or at the person to whom they returned them. On one of these occasions I was personally involved when I was given a religious object by a lady who asked me to give it to Conchita



white dress with a blue mantle. But wore the Carmelite habit, which is to a Carmelite Father who was Carmel just as She is represented in unbeknown to them! This detail is lying. Besides, they were quite common in a hamlet like outside world. To get there, one at some point the road ended and was no entertainment, there was

wonders. I remember Conchita in ground, in a sort of almost from Madrid, Amado Gavilan, who ecstasy. To our amazement we they could lift one another up with

carried a crucifix kissed by the Spectators then seized the

so that the Virgin would kiss it. She eventually did it but when Conchita returned it to me in ecstasy she said: “But this is not yours....” On another occasion, one of the girls offered something to the apparition to be kissed, but the apparition responded, “This has already been kissed...”. Whatever was kissed once was not kissed again.



From the top: Loli in ecstasy returning a medal on a chain to the rightful owner. Fr. Luis Andreu observing a vision of the girls in ecstasy. Conchita in ecstasy on June 18, 1965.

Then there were numerous cases of priests being recognized by the apparition even when they were wearing civilian clothes. This is called “hierognosis”, which means “Knowledge of the sacred”. This occurred many times, especially with priests and religious. As they were not allowed to go up to Garabandal as priests—though I must say that Don Valentin was quite tolerant on that—they had to wear civilian clothes and carry their cassocks inside a package.

Regarding Father Luis Andreu’s visit to Garabandal, we all know that he witnessed the Miracle in the Pines and it was then that he cried out: “**A** miracle, a miracle...!” dying a few hours later after saying: “this is the happiest day of my life.” Some people began then to say that Garabandal’s reputation had much to do with what happened to Father Luis.

What about the girls? Well, they were simple, innocent creatures, the most simple and innocent you can imagine. They enjoyed so much the Virgin’s presence, as if they were talking to their best friend...

Regarding the formal Messages, they seem quite unsophisticated but they are full of significance and gravity. These poor girls could not have concocted them. How on earth could those 12-year-old girls have invented that line?: “...we must visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently” or that other: “Many cardinals, many bishops and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them”?

With the benefit of hindsight, I can tell you that what happened in Garabandal was marvellous... the best experience in my whole life! I am not worthy of having lived what I lived up there. And remembering what I witnessed, word by word, has helped me to become a better Catholic more than I could ever have imagined. I’m not worried anymore about afterlife and I would go as far as to say that I am not

afraid of death, quite on the contrary. Anyway, I hope that people of good will will get to know the real Garabandal for what it is and not for the invented legends surrounding it. □

Below, the very normal girl-seers from left: Loli, Conchita, Mari Cruz and Jacinta.

