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**“But As Many
As Received Him”**

From the beginning Jesus Christ was a sign of contradiction among men. **And Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother: Behold this Child is set for the fall and for the resurrection of many in Israel, and for a sign that shall be contradicted. And your own soul a sword shall pierce, that out of many hearts thoughts may be revealed.** (Luke 2: 34-35)

From this prophecy the great historical synthesis of the fourth Gospel can be better understood. **The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not. But as many as received Him . . . He filled with good things, commencing by opening to them the possibility of becoming sons of God.** (John 1: 10-12)

The Virgin Mary is also a sign that shall be contradicted. Many save themselves and are saved in her. Many ruin themselves and are ruined through her. And always in a mysterious way, extremely difficult to understand.

Those who really seek her at Garabandal — in contrast to others who remain in suspicion and malevolence — she also fills with good things, through phenomena requiring great humility and simplicity of heart. Conchita's denials in Santander caused no lessening in the favors of the Virgin Mother; and she even appeared to extend herself more than ever for her chosen village. And thus, on the same day in which Conchita denied the apparitions, on August 3rd . . .

The First Falls from Grace

While the taxi of Fidelín Gómez was devouring the kilometers on National 634: Torrelavega, Cabezón de la Sol . . . bringing home the young girl together with her mother and aunt—unforgettable scenes were unfolding on the mountain heights at Garabandal.

A large crowd had gathered, and there were more guards than ever. Was trouble feared? No. It was simply that the Director General of Security⁽¹⁾ had come up to the village on that day, not on an official visit, but like so many other people out of easily understandable curiosity; it was not every

day that one could witness marvels so far beyond what men could stage.

Also touring the village, as we mentioned, was the parish priest from León, Father Manuel Antón. He gives us the following account:

«At nightfall, Loli and Jacinta left Ceferino's house where they had been playing upstairs. The whole crowd that was waiting in the plaza began to move. And I took great care to hold a place up close, hanging onto Loli by her coat, determined to remain near to her.

In front of us a lieutenant from the Civil Guard was walking without hurry, with his arms extended so that no one could get ahead of him. Thus he held back the girls who were following directly behind so that they could not go into the swift walk with which everyone was familiar, and which had already left the Director General and his wife far behind.

I didn't let go of Loli's coat until we came to the Pines. There the girls placed themselves in the center and the guards spread the people in a wide circle, as in a *corro de aluche*,⁽²⁾ so that everyone could see better. Inside the *corro* — at the side of the girls — remained only Mr. Carlos, his wife and myself.

One of the girls started the rosary. Everyone was kneeling on the ground. And I remember that many young men had climbed onto the limbs of the pine trees, but I can testify that their attitude and manners did not detract in any way from the general atmosphere of profound reverence and respect.

1. Carlos Arias Navarro. This man had been governor of León in the 1940's. There he met his wife, María Luz del Valle, daughter of Emilio del Valle.

In 1965 he left his position as Director of the Department of Security to become mayor of Madrid. Later he was Minister of the Republic, and finally President of the Republic (1974-1976), the last president under Franco and the first under King Juan Carlos.

According to the testimony of the Chief of the Civil Guard, previously mentioned so often, Emilio del Valle was also in Garabandal on the date with his daughters. «Don Emilio's daughters gave me several medals for me to give to María Dolores so that she could give them to the Virgin to kiss.»

2. The *aluche* is a sport played in León and Santander. The games are always played in the open air in fields or meadows. Spectators gather around in a big circle, leaving the center free for the competitors of the match — from this the popular name of *corros* for these competitions.

After the third or fourth Hail Mary of the first mystery, the rosary dropped from the hands of the young girl leading the recitation. And as if with one voice the two spoke out *Ah!* in a whisper, going suddenly into the ecstatic position with which so many are acquainted. What began then was something whose beauty and feeling could not be put into words, even when giving the best possible description.

It was clearly seen that they were in animated conversation with someone. Continuing to look upwards, at times they would trace little circles, little crosses, and other signs and figures on the ground; there they put the articles prior to holding them up in their hands as if offering them to be kissed.

I could not catch what they were saying during all these activities, but I heard what they began saying later, *Come down. Come down.* And they held their arms as if desiring to receive something in them. To me it was evident that they were asking the Virgin to come down and hand them the Infant. They had such longing in their eyes and in their requests.

Seconds later, they gave the impression that they were holding in their arms what they so much desired, since they lowered their gaze and leaned gently toward something that seemed to pass from the arms of one to the arms of the other. Meanwhile they repeated, *Oh how beautiful! How pretty! But how beautiful you are!* I can testify that they said this in a way that would impress you; in their words and in their gaze they showed souls full of love and joy.

From their gestures I could follow the time of returning the infant to the mother, etc. Then I heard them: *Don't go! How long? Three quarters of an hour already?* I hadn't noticed the time; but nearby I saw a priest—later I learned that he was the priest from Aguilar⁽³⁾ de Campoo—and showing me his watch he assured me that was the exact time that they had been in ecstasy, since he had taken care to look at the time when it had started.

The thing didn't stop there. Later we had a

3. A city famous for pastry in the north of the province of Palencia on the left bank of the Pisuerga River.

second scene that thrilled us even more. As they told me later, it was the first time that something like this had happened: the girls fell on the ground in ecstasy; but with what gracefulness and what poise!

We were all very frightened, fearing that something serious might have happened. The mother of one of the girls⁽⁴⁾—I don't know which one—came up to hold her daughter, crying with great distress. All excited, almost shouting, I began to say, *Is there a doctor in the crowd who can help with this extraordinary affair? Is there anyone here?*

Father Valentín, the parish priest, who was in the crowd, then interrupted the general worried silence, saying in a grave voice, *This affair here has always been extraordinary. What is happening is that we are men of little faith.* I admit that the ending impressed me; and after years I remember it as if I were hearing these things right now.

After a while, as if coming out of a wonderful sleep, the girls returned to themselves, and became again so natural, fresh, smiling.»⁽⁵⁾

We can imagine the people's feelings and comments as they came down from the Pines.

But the day still had not ended. In Garabandal during the early days, everything ended in the church before the Blessed Sacrament. It was a daily living of the ancient Catholic maxim: *To Jesus through Mary.*

4. From some notes written by Father Valentín concerning the 3rd of August:

«In the evening an ecstasy started about 9:00. Loli and Jacinta were praying the rosary; at the first Our Father, they went into ecstasy. They spoke with the angel, they sang the hymn to St. Michael . . .

Then a strange thing happened: the girls fell backwards. Jacinta's mother held her up, and the Director General of Security held Loli. They were fallen down for about ten minutes. Later the girls asked who made them fall.»

5. «I remember something very unusual about this apparition: María Dolores (Loli) was found lying on the ground in ecstasy with her face upwards, speaking with the Virgin and the angel, and saying, *If you don't help me, I won't be able to move.* Soon after, I saw Loli hold out her arm as if to take the hand of someone who wanted to help her, and little by little, she was lifted up until she was in a sitting position.» (Juan A. Seco's notes)



“The girls fell on the ground in ecstasy.”

In the chapel would be new communications.⁽⁶⁾

Conchita Arrives

When I arrived at the village from my trip to Santander, several priests and many people came to meet me.

For Loli and Jacinta had said in their apparition that I was coming on the road, as I really was.

The Virgin had told this to them while they were in the church.

6. From Fr. Valentín's notes:

«When the affair at the Pines finished about 10:30, the girls said that they had to go pray at the church. There they were on their knees on the first step of the altar about 10 minutes. They were asking for Conchita. And we overheard soon afterwards that she was in her home, that she had already come back.

They continued praying the rosary. When the ecstasy ended, I asked them why they hadn't taken places on the carpet as I had told them. They answered that the Virgin had said to them, *That was Father Valentín's place*, and

We have much more information on this than what Conchita writes so briefly.

When the three travelers arrived at Cossío, some young girls were awaiting them, among whom was the daughter of the school teacher at Garabandal. Aniceta, who had arrived upset and was becoming more uneasy after she saw them, kept asking, *What do those girls want? What do they want?* When they approached, she went nervously up to the school teacher's daughter. *Where are you coming from? Is there a fiesta in Garabandal?*⁽⁷⁾

On arriving at the village, Aniceta said to the people who questioned her, *I'm satisfied. There's nothing to this. We've been to the Bishop. And there's nothing to this.* For the simple woman, the

for that reason they had taken a place on the side.

Mari Cruz had not gone to Mass that day. In the evening she didn't see anything. This is the first time that this happened, although she had said on the previous night that she would have an apparition.»

7. Aniceta asked these pointed questions because she was annoyed that this group was waiting for her daughter. It seems that she had returned from Santander with the hope that everything would soon return to *normal*.



“The Virgin’s voice has been heard on a tape recorder.”

Bishop had to be absolutely infallible.

They went directly to their homes and shut themselves in; Aniceta was in no mood to talk to people or make explanations. But Maximina wanted to see what was going on and was able to witness some of the last scenes. She heard that Loli and Jacinta, during an ecstasy in the church, had asked the vision about Conchita, and then had said, *Is she coming now?* And minutes later, *Oh, she’s in the house now.* Maximina closely watched what was still going on during that memorable evening, and then went home.

When on that same night father Manuel Antón arrived at his residence in Barro (Llanes), he talked with Father Victor López, who had just returned from Santander.

—*What!* Asked Father Victor, *Do you still believe in Garabandal?*

—Now more than ever after what I’ve seen today.

—*Well I personally have almost no belief. I’ve spoken with Bishop Doroteo⁽⁸⁾ and he told me . . .*

Naturally he related his interview with Conchita on that same day and what Odriozola and Piñal had said.

Garabandal was beginning to be marked by a great sign of contradiction. **Whoever kills you, will think that he has done a service to God.** (John 16:2)

Our Lady’s Voice

The following day, when coming down from the pastures, my mother and I met my Aunt Maximina González, who was very excited and told us,

Do you know that the Virgin’s voice has been heard on a tape recorder?

8. It was not remarkable that Father Victor would speak on familiar terms with the Apostolic Administrator. Bishop Doroteo Fernández, who came from the diocese of León and for years had close relationships with many priests in that city.

**And I asked her, *What did she say?*
And she . . .**

We have additional details about this episode that Conchita mentions, and which she did not witness, since she had to go far away from the village to the pastures to gain with difficulty her daily bread. It should not be imagined that the life of the visionaries had been changed into a continual celebration of wonders, or that due to the ecstasies, they had been dispensed from all work and trouble. It was rather the contrary, and after many sleepless nights in vigils that could exhaust the strongest, they had to begin the new day very early during that summertime and had to work like all the other village girls.

Conchita is alluding to the following:

On that August day, Mari Loli and Jacinta had another apparition in the morning at the Pines. They were presenting medals and rosaries to kiss as usual, oscillating back and forth and falling. Then on their knees they were carrying on a dialogue; in it Jacinta was heard to say: *Conchita has already come. They've cut her braids in Santander. She's very pretty and tanned from going to the beach.*

When they came out of the ecstasy, they answered questions from the people around them. And one of the crowd, who had brought a tape recorder⁽⁹⁾ let them hear some of the things recorded on the tape; among these were phrases that they themselves had spoken in ecstasy. The girls were amazed since they had never heard anything like this. The stranger explained how the recorder worked and made some demonstrations during which he handed them the microphone.

If you see the Virgin again, tell her to talk through here.

Soon the girls fell into ecstasy again. Mari Loli, whom the new ecstasy had surprised with the microphone in her hand, began to converse with the Virgin: *A man has come with a thing that takes*

9. Police Chief Juan A. Seco also reported the episode with the tape recorder in his memoirs. And he said that it was Angel Domínguez Borreguero, director of the Psychiatric Hospital of Salamanca, who gave the microphone to the girls to record the Virgin's voice. Gerardo Plaza, a professor at the University of Salamanca accompanied him. Both were vacationing in Llanes, Asturias.

down everything—everything that is said. Why don't you say something so that everyone can hear you, so that the people will believe? Go ahead, say something. Yes, talk. Say something. Not for us; so that the people believe.

Eventually the ecstasy ended. What the girls had said to the apparition was played back on the tape recorder for them to hear. And at the moment when they stopped telling her to speak, an ineffable voice was heard—the witnesses classified it *most sweet*—that said:

No, I will not speak.

Loli and Jacinta exclaimed together, *Oh! That's the voice of the Virgin!*

Everyone was very excited. As Maximina said to Conchita, *The people started to cry because they heard the voice of the Virgin.* This was something exceptional.⁽¹⁰⁾

The owner of the tape recorder started shouting, *I will send this to the Pope.* The people naturally wanted to hear the marvelous voice again. And they played the tape for a second time, but at the proper time they heard nothing.

They came down from the Pines somewhat bewildered, talking of what had happened. They replayed the tape in Mari Cruz' home.⁽¹¹⁾ And once again everyone could hear the mysterious voice. And again the girls said that the voice was the Virgin's.

She was not heard after that. But the witnesses

10. I read the testimony of Gaudencio Cepeda Palacios from Torquemada (Palencia), Agustín Piney, from Santillana del Mar (Santander), Luis Toribio Millán, from Aguilar de Campoo (Palencia) and all agreed on the mysterious hearing of that unique voice, and that it was heard when the tape was finished, after a click signaled the end.

11. Sánchez-Ventura is the one who mentions *Mari Cruz' house.* (Chapter 8, Page 112, Spanish version); but Father Ramón Andreu says in his report:

«They came down distraught to the house of Conchita, who had not taken part in the vision described, so that she could hear what her companions had said. When coming to the sentences mentioned, the voice was heard to say: ***No, I will not speak.*** Conchita smiled and said very happily that it was the Virgin who had spoken.»

The Father verified that the reference to this event was received from a witness there present. José Salceda from Aguilar de Campoo (Palencia), who was at the time chauffeur to the Fontaneda family.

of that unique experience have not forgotten. All kept in their heart what one of them expressed while coming down from Garabandal, *I will go to the grave with the conviction of having heard the Virgin's voice.*

This occurrence cannot be taken lightly since there are twelve signed witnesses to it.⁽¹²⁾

We would all be overjoyed to be able to hear the truly unique voice of Our Lady. But we must recognize that would be too much of a gift for our sinful ears which are so ordinarily open for voices and words opposed to those of the Virgin.

Now we should live with hope and a desire to give a spiritual resonance to the beautiful supplication that the liturgy teaches us to direct to the Virgin with words from the Canticle of Canticles.

**Let your voice sound in my ears.
For your voice is sweet.
And your face ravishing.** (Canticles 2:14)

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The duration of August 14th was profuse with wonders. If the tape recording had occurred in the morning, in the evening occurred another series of remarkable phenomena beginning at 8 P.M., first at the Pines and later in the church. Again Loli and Jacinta were the participants. Conchita and her mother Aniceta, who had been working from early morning harvesting hay far from the village, returned straight home to rest awhile and finish their housework. At a late hour Maximina went to see them. She related:

When she came, Aniceta was saying to her daughter, *You troublemaker! Don't you see that your apparitions aren't true? Why hasn't the Virgin called you today like the others?*

The child answered very seriously, *You want me to tell you all about the ecstasies of the other girls?*

Yes! Exclaimed Maximina, Tell us about them. Tell us about them since I've just come from seeing them.

Then Conchita explained in detail everything

12. In his book, Sanchez-Ventura gives the name, age and address of seven of these.

that had happened, with the stops that the visionaries had made, and the things that they had done. On hearing this, Maximina said, *My hair is standing on end! Oh! This is fantastic! That's exactly how it happened!*



Maximina and Aniceta

Maximina later related:

«Then Aniceta said to me, But Conchita has been with me all this time shut up in the house. She turned to Conchita and asked her, How can this be?

—This is how. While I was in front of the living room, I felt the Virgin calling me by my name. And she told me everything that the others were doing and where they were walking.

And I know more, what the others don't yet know . . . What the Virgin told me. She told me that we would hear a voice, and then we were to go where it took us.⁽¹³⁾

—Oh heavens—exclaimed Aniceta—and if it takes you over a steep cliff?

13. I admit that I can give no explanation for this enigmatic passage. Let us hope that some day it will be made clear to us, since the great mystery of Garabandal is still unsolved.

Note from 1976 — I was finally able to question Jacinta in her home about this puzzling episode . . . without obtaining much light. But something led me to think that the Virgin — with these words spoken to Conchita — might have been referring to the *voice* of a person who was then alive and was soon going to die: Fr. Luis María Andreu. We know that after his death the girls *heard* his voice in ecstasy without seeing him. (See the next chapter.) And that mysterious *voice* gave them much instruction and advice.



“We would come to doubt everything. And almost everyone would come to doubt.”

—The Virgin would never do that. The Virgin would never take us to a bad place.

She also told me that the time would come when we ourselves would deny, for we would come to doubt everything.

And almost everyone would come to doubt.»

And so during the evening of August 4th, 1961, when she had barely arrived back from her *change of environment* stay in Santander, Conchita would receive the first secret and confidential communication about something that no one then could have possibly imagined, and which afterward would fall down terribly like a weight of darkness on the mystery of Garabandal: the denial of its visionaries and the falling away of a great number of its followers.

The Veil Does Not Completely Fall

The seers of Garabandal saw and heard what we ourselves now, in the time of faith and hope, can only hope to witness.

But what the girls saw and heard was not the perfect fullness of *face to face*⁽¹⁴⁾ contact with heaven. The mysterious veil was not pulled completely away from them.

14. We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face, now I know in part; but then I shall know even as I am known. (Cor. 13: 12)



"I see her, surrounded with great light."



“One can never touch either the Virgin or the Infant.”

Plácido Ruíloba, a businessman from Santander, one of the witnesses who has seen many things in Garabandal, recalls those times in 1961:

«One day I asked Mari Loli what it was that she saw during the ecstasies and visions in her home, since the ceilings were rather low and would not permit anyone to be in ecstasy above her.

—When I see the Virgin, I don't see the ceilings of my home. I see her, surrounded with great light.

I also asked her if the Virgin leaned over to kiss the articles that they offered to her. And the girl told me that the Virgin did not lean over, but descended gently from her high position until the articles were in front of her lips.

Another time I asked her whether, when they held the infant in their arms as they had stated many times, they felt his weight like other infants. The girl answered that when the Virgin handed her the infant she felt a great pleasure in holding him; but she noticed no weight, and neither could she press against him. And that she had a similar sensation, very difficult to explain, when the Virgin kissed her.»⁽¹⁵⁾

15. Taken from a June 28, 1969 article in the weekly *Que pasa?* Written by González-Gay.

In a report by Father Andreu, we have another illustration on this subject that apparently belongs to the ecstasy of

Let the theologians see if all this does or does not agree with what has been taught in the Church about the *reality* of visions and apparitions.

Can such extraordinary concordance with Church teaching, in matters that even many priests are not cognizant about, come from the girls' environment? Can it be the result of the girls' abnormal psyche, or their genius for invention?

And let the theologians look at other evidence, collected by this man who questioned the girls intensely:

«Having learned all this from Jacinta's mother (that the Virgin at times gave them the Infant), I took advantage of an occasion to question Conchita.

—If you held the Infant Jesus in your arms, then you would have touched Him.

—No. One can never touch either the Virgin or the Infant.

August 31, 1961:

«Father Valentín indicated to the girls that they should ask the Virgin if she was appearing to them *in body and soul* . . . The girls asked her, and the Virgin answered that she was not appearing to them in body and soul, but in another way; but that it was she.

Father Valentín had asked this as a proof, since he had read that *apparitions are not accustomed to be in body and soul*, and the girls were not capable of understanding these things; they knew only to say that they saw the Virgin.»



“the sensation that we surely have her there—in front of our hand.”

—But don't you hold Him in your arms?

—How can this be?

—Yes, we hold Him in them, and because of that we are not able to bring our arms more than a certain closeness to our chest.

—We don't know; but it's definitely that way. If we wish to reach her with our hands, our hand reaches a point beyond which it can't go, for she is there. But we don't feel anything, outside of the sensation that we surely have her there—in front of our hand.»

—Is He heavy?

—Not at all.

—And when you kiss the Virgin, do you feel the freshness and the softness of her face?

Moreover, we know that when the children offered the Infant pebbles or caramels that they had saved for Him, both the pebbles and the caramels were found afterwards lying on the ground.⁽¹⁶⁾

As an answer, Conchita took the hand of one of the spectators and raised it toward her face so as to cover it without touching her mouth and her eyes. And she said, *Do you understand now? As if you would kiss your own hand, without feeling it on your lips. Well it is something like that; one sees that he kisses, that he embraces, and nevertheless he feels no touch. Certainly it is she whom we kiss; but we cannot say that we feel either the freshness or anything from her face.*

Behind the Mystery, Our Lady

16. Material taken from *Star on the Mountain*.

Here I would like to say something about Garabandal using someone else's words.

"Garabandal has the same spiritual theme as the other great Marian apparitions approved by the Church.

Our Lady has come on the earth one more time because she is a Mother not only for the visionaries and for a few chosen souls, but for the whole world—this world which is becoming worse, as Loli has said.

At San Sebastián de Garabandal, tears do not flow from the Virgin's eyes as they did at La Salette. Instead she has chosen four innocent young girls. Through these children, all generous souls are called to partake of the Virgin's solicitude for the world.

One day the children in ecstasy recited the rosary under the Virgin's direction and said, 'Holy Mary, Mother of God *and our Mother*, pray for us sinners.' Mary, the Mother of God, the Mother of Jesus, lived from the manger to Calvary with her Son and for her Son. She knew the prophecies and the aged Simeon had enlightened her about the sword of sorrows that would one day pierce her heart.

During Christ's life Mary lived with serenity of soul and anguish of heart. Mary's *compassion* for her Son was a thing so deeply moving that it is almost necessary to be a sorrowful mother oneself to comprehend it.

More than others, the tragic spirit of the Spanish people seems to have penetrated into this mystery. In Spain we see statues of Our Lady clothed in black, and of the Virgin pierced with seven swords, holding in her hands a cloth to collect her tears.

Why does she weep?

It was in **Bethlehem**, the gospel says in speaking of the birth of Christ, **that Mary brought into the world her first born Son. Her first-born Son?** Actually her motherhood did not end with her Son Jesus; at the cross, she became the mother of all innumerable sinful human beings. After being the sorrowful mother at the foot of the cross, she remains the suffering mother who fears losing the children that Jesus had given her on Calvary.

Now, perhaps more than at any other period of history she sees the de-Christianization of entire countries. At Fatima she showed the three children many souls falling into hell. Few listened! Can we not understand then why she calls to the world at Garabandal to hear her message, in order to save it from the chastisement that she fears for it?

At Garabandal the children were astounded one day by the attitude of the Virgin, and Mari Cruz asked her, *You too . . . you pray too?* They did not yet understand that—after having joined with the angel in praising the Virgin full of grace—our Hail Marys ask her to *pray for us sinners*.

She knows that a terrible chastisement can fall upon her children on earth if they do not convert. She makes an almost desperate effort to warn us, to implore us to prevent our souls from falling into hell and our bodies from being chastised. She then entreats us to pray for the world with her.

Our Mother in Heaven stands before the throne of God. She asks devoted souls, her little children, and those that resemble them to join her prayer and pray with her to snatch the victory from Satan, and gain the triumph that Jesus wants to grant her."

(Star on the Mountain)

**Yes it is she, the mother concerned for her children,
who is beyond the mist and mystery of Garabandal.**