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Recollections

In October of 1966, Conchita, at the time a young girl of seventeen, enrolled as a boarder in a school operated by the religious of the Concepcionistas Misioneras de la Ensañanza at 11 Miranda Street, Burgos.

The people who were looking out for her welfare thought that this would provide her with both an *isolated retreat* and an *education*.

As a retreat it would serve to isolate and shelter her from the indiscreet attention and curiosity that surrounded her in the village; and it would serve also to educate her since she was behind in her schooling and spiritual instruction.

While here Conchita was under the care of a young religious: the directress of the college. Her name was plain: María Nieves García, but her personality was not. She did not know much about Garabandal, except for the episcopal «Notas» that said *No*. Nevertheless, she set out to help the new student whom she sensed to be out of the ordinary.

To be helpful, she put herself completely at Conchita's service, disposed to receive and hear her anytime. Conchita responded well to that attitude and soon an excellent spiritual relationship grew between them, with many periods of prayer, confidential words, and animated conversations.

The writings that the sister preserves from those times begin like this:

Feeling herself strange to everything, Conchita came to the college in such a bad state that she had to struggle very hard. And furthermore she constantly had to hide her identity. She needed a friend in whom she could confide everything that she was holding inside, to whom she would be able to unburden her worries and speak of "everything that had happened" naturally and simply. Because of this, I told her that she could come to see me in my free hours whenever she wanted to. I left this completely to her preference; I never called for her myself. . .

From the statements of the *former child visionary*, I am only going to mention here the ones that refer to the *apparitions*, which even then seemed to be far away — and not only because of the passage of time. From time to time her memory would flash back to the events, inspiring her to speak out.⁽¹⁾ It should not be forgotten that all the conversation recorded in Burgos was occurring when the girl was

beginning a period of great darkness, that is in the full phase of doubts and denials. Because of this, Sister María Nieves never openly broached the subject of what had happened during those exceptional days at Garabandal.

October 19, 1966

Finally they brought Conchita to me. My impression was excellent: simple and candid, with an unusual and penetrating look; I was pleased.

Her mother talked to me alone, and informed me of certain things . . . She was worried about her daughter's vanity and lack of piety. She urged me not to let anyone see her except six people.

Two days later, on the 21st, confidential conversations began.

October 23

I was with Conchita for some time. Her conversation was confidential, simple, frank. We discussed several matters. I told her about her excessive spending; she recognized it and accepted it well.

Because of something that Conchita had discussed during the course of the interview, Sister said to her:

— *How could you have said that you put the host on your tongue, if it were not true?*⁽²⁾

— **When I said it, it was because at that time it appeared to me that way. If not, how could I have said it?**

Seconds later:

— **I love the Virgin as if she were my mother. One can talk with her about everything . . . I remember that one day she told us: *Be very clean; I took care to be that way too, when I was living on the earth.***

The sister showed photos of a picture painted by an American who wanted her opinion:

— **I don't like it.**

1. Though not all the facts mentioned here occurred in 1961, what is stated can help to understand better what happened during that year.

2. This refers to the *little miracle (milagruco)* on the night of July 18th, 1962, which will be discussed in future chapters.

— *Why not?*

— The expression is very different from the one she had. She wasn't wearing a crown, only stars. her hands — not so stretched out. The hair was parted in the center and not so wavy. The head wasn't bowed down; she moved it, but she didn't hold it like that. When she carried the child, she didn't hold His robe, although He wore it without a clasp . . .

Everything — the Sister noted — *was said with the greatest simplicity and spontaneity, without stopping to reflect.*

October 25

A long interview. At one time Conchita stated:

— **What should I do so as not to have empty hands? I examine myself and I see that I don't do bad; but . . .**



“empty hands”

— *It is not only not doing bad, but also practicing good.*

— **That is just what the Virgin said to me!**

October 26

I heard — said the Sister — *that the Virgin called you prior to our falling into ecstasy. What were those calls?*

— The first was a sudden feeling of mild joy. The second was a stronger joy. The third made us go outside, overwhelmed with joy.

What it was like to live in those times when we were seeing the Virgin so often! Although we had to remain without sleeping, it didn't matter to us. We were so happy!

— *Did the people from the village harass you?*

— Yes, but it didn't matter to us. We were so happy that we didn't suffer.

October 29

Also a long interview. Conchita spoke at length about the times when the Virgin was appearing to them . . .

Certainly — the Sister stated — *the Virgin prefers to appear to children. Since they don't have human respect, they'll transmit her messages better.*

— I think that I would have done the same even if I had been an adult. One day when I had finished speaking to her, the Virgin told me to turn toward a couple who were behind me and tell them, *You aren't living right.* I did this, although it embarrassed me. I know that they were moved, since they began to cry and went to confession on that same day. She told me many things like that . . .

What do you think the Angel was like? An adult? No, he was about 9 years old, with a blue tunic and rose-colored wings. We didn't see his hands, except when he gave us Communion.

Many times the Virgin didn't look directly at us, but farther away at the people who were behind us. Sometimes she changed her expression; but she didn't stop smiling. I asked her, *Whom are you looking at?* She said to me, **I AM LOOKING AT MY CHILDREN.**



“without sleeping”



“like a friend—just as if she were living with us”

We talked to her about everything, even about our cows . . . She laughed very much. We also played together. How happy we were then! We didn't suffer a thing, although some of the people bothered us.

She seemed to be about seventeen. Because of this, I was pleased when a retreat master said that we would see the Virgin about this age.

I like to hear the Virgin talked about. I've heard only a few priests speak about her. One of them told me one day, *If these things about Garabandal aren't true, I won't put faith in anything.* Do you think that's good? it troubled me.

Sister wrote down that Conchita was preoccupied with the expression of that imprudent priest, and recalled it frequently.

— How nice it was to be with the Virgin! She was really like a friend; just as if she were living with us. And she called us by our nick-

names like the people did. She didn't say *María Concepción*, but *Conchita*; not *María Dolores*, but *Loli*.

Now we get weary in our periods of prayer; but then we didn't feel weary, or sleepy, or anything. We saw her so many times!

October 30

— I learned many things in my village since the people confided their problems to me. Some of them were tremendous. The ones that made the biggest impression on me were those of priests; these troubled me!

A confessor told me to ask the Lord for the desire of suffering, and also to accept pain with joy. I couldn't speak to the Lord like that, since it doesn't come from me. I'm afraid of suffering!



“We saw her so many times!”



“FAITHFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE”

— *I understand; but we ought to trust in Him, and know that we ought to serve for something in His Hands. God wishes to take us as little instruments, perhaps as "tapers for lighting the large candles."*

— *That's true. We are instruments; people shouldn't notice us. In the village they shoved us, they pulled on our clothes . . . They sought after us. And although so many went up to the Pines, not all of them approached the tabernacle.*

November 1

Feast of All Saints. To make use of extra free time, Conchita and the Sister spoke for a long time, taking as a topic the life of the blessed in heaven and what they should do to get there.

— *One day in an apparition with the Virgin, we were wearing hairshirts, although very loose. In order that she would notice that we were wearing them, we felt them from time to time. She said to us, **Yes, I know that you are wearing them; but that is not exactly what I ask***

from you, or what pleases me the most, but rather
FAITHFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE.

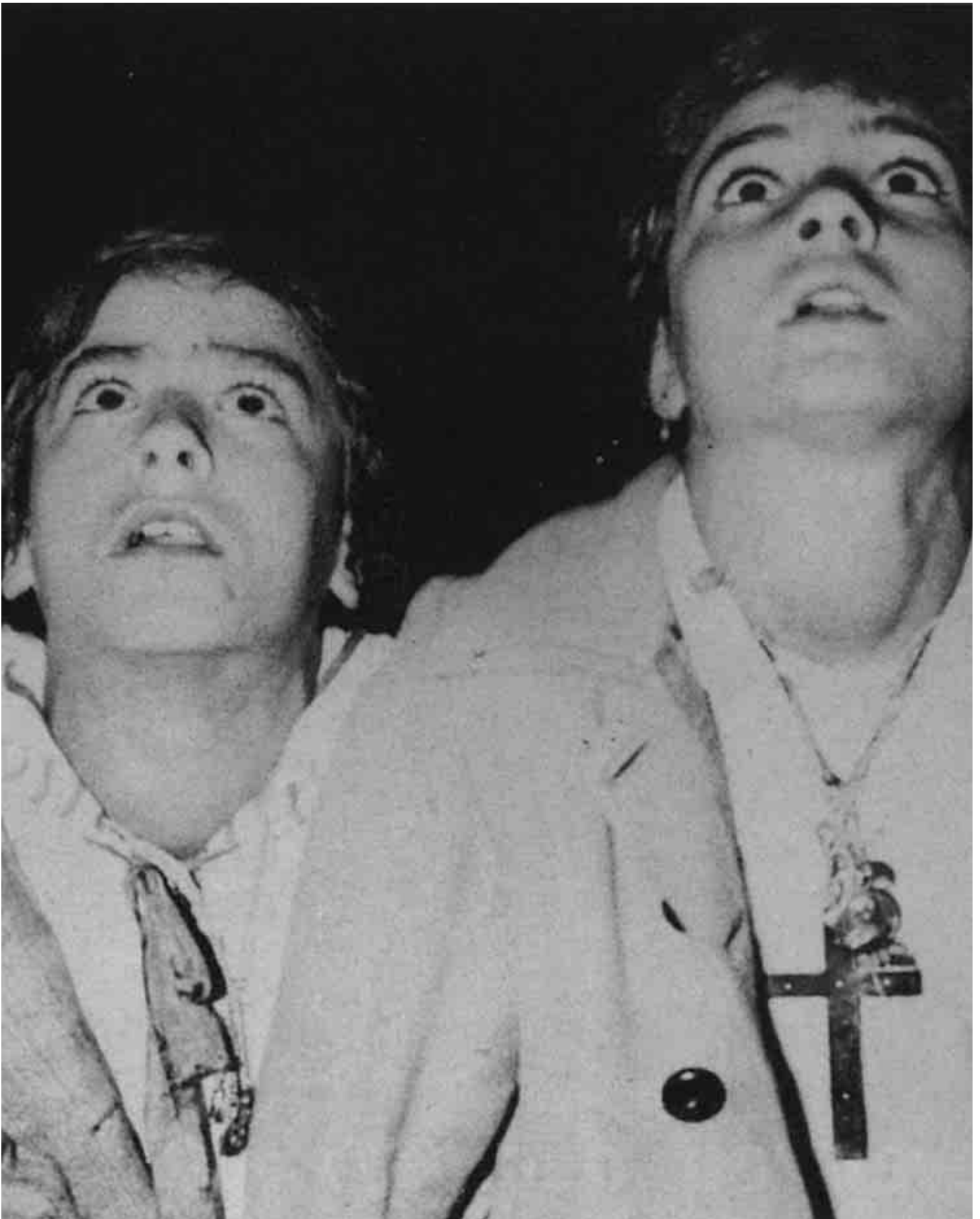
Once she also said, *If you see an angel and a priest together, you should first show respect to the priest.*

I asked the Virgin, *Will the end of the world be during the time of these future happenings?* She answered me, *No, the end of the times.*

The *Warning* will be a purification, a preparation for the *Miracle*, and everyone will see it. It will make people aware of the evil that they do with their sins.

After Paul VI, there will be only two more popes; and after that, the *end of the times.*⁽³⁾ I told the date of the *Miracle* to Cardinal Ottaviani and the Pope's confessor. The Pope gave me the impression of being an oppressed person, as if restrained by the cardinals and the hierarchy.

3. The *Warning*, the *Miracle*, the *Chastisement*, the *End of Times* will come out in detail in the upcoming chapters.



“The Warning will be a purification, a preparation for the Miracle.”

The *Miracle* will show the great love of God.

November 3

— After his death Fr. Luis Andreu taught me to pray the Hail Mary in Greek.



We heard his voice during an ecstasy; but we didn't see him.

Also he told me a message for his brother, and a French song, which I don't remember anymore, although Fr. Ramón knows it by heart.

He told us how they had buried him . . .

His voice was the same as when he was alive.

November 6

The sister spoke to Conchita about detachment, about the need for her to restrain herself in the satisfaction of her desires . . .

— I was surrounded with so many ridiculous tastes and received so many gifts that I became accustomed to waste things . . . But I understand what I ought to do and know that you are telling me this for my own good.

Today a newspaper in Burgos came out with the events of Garabandal; but they didn't tell where I am.

— Are you happy when you see that they publicize it?

— Before, very much. Now, as if it weren't my affair, as if it were something completely separated from me.

The people pray that the *Miracle* will take place. Don't you see that this is foolish? It will take place whether they pray or not. I only request that the message be fulfilled. Many pray for the *Miracle* in order that others, who have not believed, will be put down. This doesn't seem good to me. I think that my other is anxious for the *Miracle* to come in order to be free from doubts and worry . . . It's wonderful to love God and to have faith, without seeing anything. I would like to do it that way, but . . .

— God is patient; He gives us light by steps. The Virgin taught you slowly, but never showed herself displeased, isn't that right?

— No, never! We never saw her that way, even when she was speaking to us about the *Chastisement*. We have seen the *Chastisement*, did you know that? But whether or not it will take place, that depends. when we told her our faults, she was silent.

When saying good-bye, she kissed us, and it was like this . . . We didn't feel any physical contact and at the same time we weren't able to advance further, since there was something there that prevented us from doing it.

We wanted to touch, and our hand didn't touch anything on arriving at her, nor was it able to continue further. We held the Child Jesus in our arms, and we felt no weight, nor did we feel any physical contact; but He was there.

The Virgin told us one day that she put perfume on the sides of her sandals while she was living on earth . . .

The Virgin never wept, although the people cried with us when they saw us weep. On seeing the Virgin, tears escaped from us many times; but it was from emotion.



“The Miracle will show the great love of God.”



“Helping others has done me much good.”

At the time of the prediction of the *Chastisement*, the whole village confessed.

November 8

— Helping others has done me much good. When I visited the hospitals, I noticed that I benefited. Then I remembered the things that attracted me at other times — like amusements, fine clothes — and I saw that they weren't worth the trouble.

— *Suffering leads to God.*

— Yes; but also joy. Joys have helped me many times. I think of heaven — how good to be there! The first thing that I'm going to do is embrace the Virgin and the THREE⁽⁴⁾ very hard.

God does exceptional things, isn't that so? And the

4. This surely refers to the three persons of the Blessed Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

people don't respond well.

I recall many times what happened in my village. We saw many cases of hysteria. They touched my body, thinking that they would be cured . . . And there were even those who didn't go there because they believed that I read consciences. That made me laugh. How was I going to read consciences? The things that I said to certain people at the time were told to me by the Virgin.

The Sister showed a picture of a holy card that attempted to show the Virgin as she appeared at Garabandal:

— Heavens! What this does to me! exclaimed Conchita.

We laughed — noted the Sister — and she described again how she saw the Virgin, with such exactness that she said nothing different from what she had repeated so many times. She spoke at times of



“Heaven—how good to be there!”



“She told me that I wouldn’t see her there again.”

everything as if her ‘denials’ had not existed. This is really marvelous, and at the same time there is a tremendous mystery here, indescribable.

November 9

The Sister tried to lift up her spirits, telling her that when the darkness passed she would enter into the fullness of God . . .

— What a joy if it were like that! But could I possibly experience more joy than I have experienced in the past? The apparitions of the Virgin filled me with happiness. But the locutions of Jesus are much better. I don't understand . . . It is something superior . . . I pray that He accomplishes His will in me.

The Virgin taught us to pray the litany and the mysteries of the rosary that we didn't know. She only prayed the Gloria; if she began with the other prayers, it was in order to instruct us.

The last time that I saw her was on November 13th of the past year at the Pines. She told me that I wouldn't see her there again . . . *(She understandably made a long pause of silence and sentiment.)*

Some time ago while in my village, the Virgin pointed out a Redemptorist father, a close friend of Mercedes Salisachs, for me to confess to him. This priest advised me not to dress so well, that he didn't like to see me so well-dressed. I didn't feel inclined to tell him my affairs; it didn't come out of me. I told this to the Virgin, and she was silent; she left me without a response. One day I made up my mind and told this priest what had happened. This made him very happy; but I was never able to communicate anything to him; it was impossible for me.

November 12

Conchita seemed to need a day of rest, especially spiritually, to restore peace in her mind, agitated by a thousand confusions and doubts. The Sister understood, and responded to this need. At an early hour the two went out walking down the road leading toward the famous Monastery of Miraflores, taking lunch and a couple harmonicas. On the way Conchita spoke of memories that she held inside and needed to share . . . For example:

— You know Father Collin? Now he is trying to pass for the Pope.⁽⁵⁾ He was in my village. He wanted to speak with me; but my mother would not allow it. The people finally threw him out of the village.

Well, when I was in Rome, they showed me a picture from a newspaper in which I was shown at Father Collin's side. And it mentioned there that he had been with me . . . And many other lies. I deny this, since I have never been with him. They make up many things like this.

One day a woman came to my village, and insistently asked me to inscribe a card for her. I wrote nothing more than, *Ask that god bless our only Pope, His Holiness Paul VI.* I don't know why that occurred to me. A little later a priest I knew well came running up and said to me, *What have you written for that woman? She is a mason, a supporter of Father Collin.*

The way was delightful — writes the sister — *it*

5. This man lives in France and has his cortege and small group of followers. He calls himself Clement XV.



“The Virgin taught us to pray.”

was a little cold, but bearable. We stopped for a while on top of a little hill overlooking the city and I taught her to play the harmonica. She learned almost the complete *Noche de Paz* and the *Ave Maria of Lourdes*. Then going on in silence, we prayed a rosary under the sky. After this we entered the monastery, and sitting down there, we talked about a painting . . . At six at night people came to pick us up in a car. The afternoon had passed devoutly and swiftly, in a wonderful peace.

At night we returned, and the two of us got together in the chapel while everyone was resting. She was in the chapel there at the beginning of November 13th on which she was going to have the first anniversary of the last apparition of the Virgin.

We began by meditating on the rosary. The chapel was dark; only the statue of the Virgin was lit up. The silence was complete and the presence of God was felt. during each mystery we paused, and I expressed thoughts that came forth spontaneously. I've never prayed in my life with more fervor! We were on our knees in the same pew . . .

After reposing a while in silence, seated in the first pew, we began our litany of petitions. With quiet around us, we spoke our requests for one person or another in a hushed voice. The moment was tense, with an extraordinary peace; we seemed to be a single person praying simply and with immense confidence. She began the petition, and I completed it, or vice versa. She prayed for a whole multitude of people and intentions, her glance fixed on the statue of the Virgin . . . Conchita began to say in a whisper:

— My mother and my brother suffer. Chon⁽⁶⁾ has told me this and I see it from the letters that I receive . . . I don't know why it is that on returning from the monastery, I am finding such sorrow . . . This morning I didn't have the desire either to pray or think during Mass. My head was bowed low; I don't know if I accomplished anything. If this dryness would leave me, that would make me very happy. Do you think that thinking this is opposed to the will of God?

— No, Christ also said, "Take this chalice from me." You still have doubts, don't you?



"a dream that has gone away"

— Just as before. That is, the same as before August 15th.⁽⁷⁾ I see all the apparitions as if they had been a dream that has gone away.

— Can you deny them completely?

— No. No, that I could not! I would feel remorse. When I deny, I feel inside — deep down — something that doesn't leave me at peace.

In a long series of petitions, there were these two:

María Nieves: *We petition you, Lord, for the Pope.*

Conchita: *And for all those who surround him.*

María Nieves: *We petition you, Lord, for priests.*

Conchita: *So that they may be holy, and may not stop wearing the cloth out of presumption. I do not like to see a priest as a layman. Not at all.*

The unplanned vigil ended near the altar — as Sister María Nieves wrote — like two children in front of the Mother of Heaven and God the Father. Something that I couldn't forget, for the simplicity, the peace, the interior joy. It was one o'clock when we retired, and it had seemed a very short time to us. On getting up from the floor, Conchita said to me:

— I would like to stay all night.

6. Ascensión de Luis, the young Jewish girl mentioned in a previous chapter, who converted to Catholicism.

7. On August 15th, 1966, a type of darkness concerning the apparitions fell on Conchita's mind.



The Virgin requested prayers for priests.



“Who loves the Mother, also loves the Son.”

In 1962, when they were talking about the threat of war, I mentioned it to the Virgin. *Will there be a war?*

She only answered me, *God does not want war for His children.*

That says a lot, doesn't it?

In order to inspire Conchita to be strong in the face of difficulties, the sister talked to her about Christ. This obviously pleased Conchita; however, she ended up saying this:

— I think more of the Virgin. It is . . . as if I have more feeling for her. The Lord is very serious. And when He speaks to me, He seems concerned for everyone. The Virgin, as if more for me . . . Anyway, in summing things up: who loves the Mother, also loves the Son. Isn't that so?

November 25

— I remember that my village made me suffer. I felt as if imprisoned in it. I acted by the command of others who constantly advised me, *Go to Mass . . . Pray the rosary . . . Do this . . . Give up that . . .* At times I thought I would be happy to be in a hermitage away from everyone, and to work there alone for God, and see what I was capable of doing without their forever telling me.

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On the one hand I have no desire for the feast of the Immaculate Conception to come because it will hurt me that this day arrives and I won't have anything. (All these years since 1961, I have had an apparition or locution on it.) And on the other hand, I fear that something will be given to me — since later anxieties will come over me as to whether it was or was not.

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Do you know something? You gave me one of the envelopes that they made for all the girls on the 21st, the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin. It was sealed, and I received it with a great desire to know what the Virgin wanted from me. Do you know what mine contained? What she had told us so many times: *Fidelity in everyday life!*

November 15

— In my village, they told me several times to kiss my mother when I had displeased her. I couldn't do this and it irritated me. I don't like to kiss. When they embraced me, I held out my cheek, but I didn't kiss; I really only kissed Loli.

November 16

— Sometimes they judged me bad without reason. I remember that one day the guards told me something bad that had been said about me. I let out a laugh, because I didn't understand. They became angry at my laughter. Later I mentioned it in my home, and everyone was upset. They even came to threaten the guards for having said such things to a child.

November 17

Conchita had heard that there was danger of war because of the situation in Gibraltar . . . She was worried, thinking of her brother Miguel, and she spoke to the Sister as soon as she saw her:

— How afraid I am of war! Will it happen?



Conchita holds up the crucifix for her mother to kiss.

November 29

— I would like to have my brothers priests. I have known many . . . I remember a young priest of the Heart of Mary, to whom I wanted to give the crucifix to kiss, drew back, and weeping said, *I am not worthy, I am not worthy . . .* When I had finished seeing the Virgin, I went up to him and, apart from everyone, communicated to him what she had told me. *He wants to take off the habit and leave the congregation.* On hearing this, he began to cry again. I've never seen him since.

December 2

The first Thursday of the month — a priestly Thursday. During the interview, the Sister read to Conchita some edifying letters from priests.

— Before the Virgin told me about it, I thought that all priests were good. It had never occurred to me that they could commit mortal sins too.

I have known many . . . Some appeared holy to me in the beginning; later I saw things that I didn't like. I learned later how people can be deceived. At first I was very friendly to all, but on noticing that my trust was badly interpreted, I changed.

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Sometimes I wonder if there's anyone among the persons that I know who really loves me. Many compliments, many endearing phrases, but they want me for themselves. I saw that even the priests got angry with each other in order to have a bigger part or involvement with me . . . I'm ashamed that they praise me, and I'm pleased that they tell me what I do wrong.

December 3

The Sister read and explained the parable of the Good Shepherd. On this occasion, Conchita was confiding the memories of her life from early youth, *with peace and joy . . .* She ended this way:

— Everything that happened I see now as if in a dream — the apparitions, the people . . . I'm sorry that many doubt the apparitions because of my denials. It occurs to me that, although I denied, I would still like to say, *Have hope! Don't be discouraged.* I think that the three other girls feel the same.



“a girl with many faults”

When I think about the Virgin, I picture her as something I dreamed. How nice it would be if now she would come here in this parlor with the two of us! What a joy! It isn't necessary to be perfect to see her. I have been a girl with many faults. On the day on which the Angel appeared to us, I had just fought with Jacinta. And I see that today I still don't like to pray. She comes to make us good . . .

If you could see how human the Virgin is! Sometimes she comically repeated our badly spoken expressions, and she did this in order that we might have confidence. But we had it from the first moment.

Now I have doubts about many things; but what I don't feel the least doubt about are the *calls*. I remember them perfectly, and moreover, as if I were feeling them right now.

December 6

— We have not always been treated well. Sometimes they said outrageous things about us, and they insulted us. How many times I had to listen to outright lies about us!



“How human the Virgin is!”



“The Bishop said I should write it.”

— *When they acted this way, did it bother you?*

— No, I remained quite calm. Actually I was not hurt; and it was this way with the four of us. I don't know the cause. That they say nasty things to me doesn't matter to me; it humiliates you much more when they flatter you.

I don't feel rancor or hate toward anyone. When the priests of the Commission or those in charge of us attacked us, and the others became angry because of this, I did not. I thought that they had to act like this; and I loved them. I love very much the people who seem good, pious; and also I love those who are sick, and those who live their vocation or, having a vocation, are not able to attain it. Perhaps, after the Miracle, I also will be able to become a nun. What a pleasure that would be!⁽⁸⁾

January 27, 1967

Because of certain rumors, the Sister asked Conchita about her diary:

8. Conchita spent the Christmas holiday in the village with her family.

— *Did you write the diary about the apparitions on your own or did they tell you to do it?*

— A priest told me that the Bishop said I should write it.

— *You never speak of your conversations with the Virgin.*

— What for? We said such stupidities . . . Nevertheless, she never reprimanded us for it; she listened. One day we asked her something serious: What we should do to practice penance. She answered us, *Always do what your conscience tells you.* She didn't say anything else. I seem to remember also that once she told Loli to obey her mother.

January 31

Certain persons had brought water from somewhere or other, and also some relics for Conchita. When the Sister in doing her job was giving them to her, saying that *a visionary* had brought them, Conchita told her . . .

— It seems that you don't believe anything about this. I don't have much faith in seers either, without denying that some are true.

— *For me not to believe much in these things is logical, but for you that . . .*

— That is something very different! I don't know how to explain it; but it's not the same.

— *They said that this visionary sent a message to your mother, saying harsh things, and that you threw it away. Why? . . .*

— She said that my mother was acting very bad toward me . . . The Virgin didn't say that!

— *She is more kind, is that right?*

— Oh yes! She would never say that.

March 2

— Whenever we prayed the Gloria, the Virgin bowed her head.



“Always do what your conscience tells you.”

— *Did she rest standing on top of the Pines?*

— **We didn't see the Pines or anything else. We only saw her.**

April 10

Many things had occurred during the previous weeks, for example, the «Nota» of Bishop Puchol, dated March 17th. This had greatly affected the Sister; and to a lesser degree, Conchita, who was able to notice the effect of the «Nota» in the village, where she spent her Holy Week vacation.⁽⁹⁾

That April 10th an issue of *La Gaceta Ilustrada* had fallen into her hands, publishing a pitiless article by the reporter Julio Poo San Román of Santander, speaking out against the events and visionaries of Garabandal.

— *How did this article affect you?*

— **It's very bad. There are many lies in it. For example, it says that I didn't want the Bishop to inform the people about my denials, and the truth is that I myself asked them to make it known so that I would be more at peace with myself that way. What makes me suffer is that the people now look on us in a bad way . . .**

I have only one desire: That the date of the Miracle come — not for the Miracle itself, but in order to see once and for all if it is true or not. If it has been the Virgin, the Miracle will take place, because what she says is always fulfilled. As for myself, regardless of whether the Miracle takes place or doesn't take place, it will always be bad for me.

— *Why is that?*

— **If the thing is true — for having acted badly, denying and not being generous. And if it isn't true . . . well for everything!**

If what happened to us, being good little girls, hasn't been supernatural, and God has permitted it to happen with the consequences that can result, then I couldn't believe that God



“not being generous”

is good. And my mother and brothers could never believe it.

The Sister advanced some explanations in order to clear up a problem and Conchita replied:

— **I don't know the first two cases that you mentioned, since we didn't begin with a lie, and I can assure you that we made no agreement among ourselves.**

— *And what followed?*

— **It was the same as at the beginning. It isn't true that we rehearsed this! How could they think and say that?**

— *Then I see clearly that these things did not come from you girls.*

— **I don't know how they came. I see everything darkly. What is clear to me is that we didn't plan them.**

9. This «Nota» given to all news media by the Bishop of Santander, Vicente Puchol, intended to obliterate as false everything about Garabandal.



“The Miracle will take place.”



“It was not a game of ours.”

April 19

— *What the Virgin told you about pride and humility . . . did you receive that together with the message?*

— No. She said it on another occasion: *What God loves most is humility; what most displeases Him is pride.*

— *Would you like to see the Virgin again?*

— It's all the same to me. I hope to see her in heaven.

— *Why do you talk that way?*

— It would be painful for me now because of my denials . . .

April 21

They discussed the article in *La Gaceta Ilustrada*:

— It was not — Conchita remarked — a game of ours, nor did we do it to deceive. Nor did the pastor talk to us about guardian angels on that day. He almost never gave us catechism. Nor did we get together in order to make up the message . . . Nor did I prepare any dough to make the host for the Communion . . .

It's true that we did many stupid things too, that Cardinal Ottaviani read to me in Rome ⁽¹⁰⁾ from a report by the bishop of Santander. For example, the thing about the powders, the statue of the Virgin that we were going to hide, and some other things . . .

April 30

To inspire her, the Sister talked to Conchita about how much Our Lord and the Virgin loved her.

10. When she was called there in December, 1966.



“What God loves most is humility. What most displeases Him is pride.”



“The Virgin is very much with us; she isn’t distant.”

— Yes. But They love everyone. When we were talking to the Virgin about things that were too personal, she didn’t answer us; she was concerned about others.

May 4

Conchita had decided to celebrate this month of the Virgin better than ever. On this day she met with the Sister and told her:

— If the Virgin would present herself to me now, how many things I would ask her! At the time, we only said stupid things to her, things without importance. I think that we did it to make her stay longer so that she wouldn’t leave us, for at times she remained silent and didn’t look at us.

— Do you think about the mysteries when you pray the rosary?

— No. I give my attention to what I’m saying in prayer.

When I hear the Virgin talked about, whatever is said good or bad, I think is said to me, since I consider her something mine.

The Virgin is very much with us; she isn’t distant . . .

One day she gave me a statement to tell a certain priest; I gave it to him and he wept very much.

(Here the Sister added that the husband of one of

her former students had recounted how Conchita had spoken personally to him in Garabandal about something very hidden in his conscience, and that this had made him resolve to change his way of life.)

May 8

By a telephone call from Francisco Sánchez-Ventura the Sister had received news that the Bishop of Santander had just been killed in a tragic accident; the Sister told it to Conchita, who was overcome and later broke out in tears.

— I am so sorry about what has happened! He was very good and very young. The poor man! He did everything with good intentions. Isn’t that true? This warns us that we must be prepared. So many things can happen to us in this life! . . . *Now the Bishop knows everything.*

June 11

The apparitions were discussed. Sister asked:

— *Why did you fall on the ground?*

— We were not aware of that; we were with the Virgin! And we followed the conversation or communication with her, without knowing if we were running or not, if we were on our knees or lying on the ground.

The Sister makes a note here: *A few days previously Father Laffineur had come and asked me how Conchita looked to me. I answered: “Simple, natural, candid, intelligent. So normal and well-balanced that I could certify that in my profession as a teacher I haven’t known another like her.” I also told him that I didn’t find a very strong will in her.*

June 14

— The Virgin didn’t tell me that she didn’t want me to leave the village and be in school.

June 17

— *Our greatest treasure is within. The external appearance doesn’t matter much; it should be made agreeable, but without affectation.*



“without knowing if we were running or not.”



“We announced the first message.”

— I understand, and I see that you are right. We told the Virgin that we wanted to be beautiful like her . . . But she smiled and was silent. If she had conceded it to us to have her face! How the people would have looked at us! She is so beautiful!

— *At times you did strange things in front of her.*

— Yes, we walked sitting down for example. In the beginning I was very surprised in seeing this in the others; afterwards I became accustomed to it. I saw them descend a steep stairway this way.

I recall once having a knee injury. The doctor ordered rest, but I didn't take care of the knee. And it didn't hurt after that. Without taking a treatment, I had a complete cure.

They said that on another occasion I had left blood on a stone; but later I didn't notice anything on my knees, except a little scratch.

— *In some of those things, did you add something of your own invention?*

— Yes.

— *Doesn't it seem to you that some of your little deceits, on top of seeing your present doubts, could contribute in some way to cloud the truth?*

— It is very possible that could be. Don't think that I haven't thought about it.

* * *

Conchita passed the summer in her village, with the exception of the last half of August when she was back again at school. In October she returned to Burgos to begin the 1967-1968 school year.

October 18

— *Have you noticed what day it is today? We should do something more in prayer. Shall we stay in prayer this night? . . . What happened on this day in 1961?*

— We announced the first message. We had already seen it beneath the Angel; but we didn't understand what it meant. The Virgin explained it to us . . .



“She is so beautiful!”

And in what happened to us during those years I see the work of the devil too.

I remember, for example, the voice that we heard in the great darkness that I have already mentioned.

And that other day on which Loli and Jacinta intended to jump down from the choir loft of the church.

At the time I wasn't seeing the Virgin, and I was near the main altar.

I remember that they came down, and touching my face, asked me,

—"*Are you Conchita?*"

On that day, it certainly seems to have been the devil.





Aniceta and her daughter

On December 22nd, Aniceta came to Burgos to pick up her daughter. She had not come to take her back only for the Christmas vacation; she was taking her back permanently. There had been strong exterior influences and pressures that caused this.

On one of the last visits Conchita told the Sister:

— From time to time I see more clearly that what happened to the four of us girls was true, but we wasted it . . . Our denials are our own doing. Sometimes, although very briefly, I see this very clearly.

And the Sister closed the long chapter of her remembrances of the extraordinary closeness to the *child* of the Montaña with these lines:

I give thanks to the Most Holy Virgin for everything. Whether she has appeared or not at Garabandal, I have been moved in everything by their love, and certainly all this has brought me to love her more and to feel closer to her.

May this be the final result for everyone, while we continue to revolve between the light and the shadows of . . .

THE GREAT MYSTERY OF GARABANDAL





PART TWO

Through Mary to Jesus

1962