

Garabandal - Introductory Remarks

I shall now examine prophecies from the episodes in Garabandal.

The events at Garabandal in 1961 and following years are well documented. You may find details at

<http://www.garabandal.org/>

which has many photographs, and also

<http://www.garabandalny.com/home.html>

The latter is an excellent site. It has feature-length documentaries you may play on your computer, complete books to download without cost, and the story of Joey Lomangino, who was instrumental in bringing world attention to the Garabandal events. His story, in itself, is fascinating. An important book is *Our Lady Comes to Garabandal*, which contains the daily diary of Conchita Gonzales. She wrote the diary from September, 1962 to the summer of 1963, and hence it covers a period during many of the apparitions. The book providing the diary was written by Joseph A. Pelletier, famous for his books on Fatima. Another useful book is *God Speaks at Garabandal*.

Garabandal is a remote village in northern Spain in a rugged and beautiful setting. It lies in the foothills of the Cantabrian Mountains at an elevation of 1,630 feet. It is located 15 miles inland from the Cantabrian coast some 35 miles (50 miles by car because of the winding mountain roads) west by southwest of Santander, the capital of the small Castilian province of the same name. The Pena Sagra Ridge, which rises to 6,000 feet behind it, is hidden by fog much of the time. To the west are the majestic Picos de Europa mountains. The village is small, with no more than 300 people. It is impressively quiet, with no doctor and no resident pastor at the parish church.

In the evening of June 18, 1961, four girls were playing on the outskirts of the town — Conchita Gonzalez, Maria Dolores (Mari-loli) Mazon, Jacinta Gonzalez and Maria Cruz Gonzalez. We see reports that despite the same surnames the girls were not directly related. However, in such a small town they surely were cousins to one another. Maria Cruz was eleven; the others were twelve. All were from poor families.

Suddenly they heard a loud noise, like thunder, and saw before them a figure in heavenly light. They identified this figure as the Archangel Michael. On the following days the Angel appeared to them again in the same place. He announced that on July 2 they would see Our Lady. This was the beginning of the Garabandal events.

The news spread quickly through the region. July 2 was a Sunday and the town was crowded with the curious. There were people from all social levels and many from out of town, among them physicians and priests. At six in the evening the girls went to the place where the Angel had appeared, and to the surprise of the crowd they entered into ecstasy. Our Lady appeared to them accompanied by two angels, one being St. Michael. (Remember, these identities are from the children, according to their understanding.) The reality of the Vision as a beautiful lady may be grasped from their description:

"She is dressed in a white robe with a blue mantle and a crown of golden stars. Her hands are slender. There is a brown scapular on her right arm, except when she carried the Child Jesus in her arms. Her hair, deep nut-brown, is parted in the center. Her face is long, with a fine nose. Her mouth is very pretty with lips a bit thin. She looks like a girl of eighteen. She is rather tall. There is no voice like hers. No woman is just like her, either in the voice or the face or anything else. "

The girls experienced many more apparitions after the first. During 1961 and 1962 these took place several times each week. The four did not always see the apparitions together; sometimes only one would, other times two or three. The appearances might occur at any hour, many times at night, and even early in the morning. Regardless of the hour the girls would arise early the following morning to work in the fields, or tend the cattle and sheep, without showing signs of fatigue.

The entire Garabandal event had about 2,000 apparitions, and more than 40 locutions. Many additional details may be found on the above web sites and in the books I mentioned.

In order to recognize the fearful position of the Church on the Garabandal events note that Bishop Eugenio Beitia, one of the former bishops of Santander, issued a decree on July 8, 1965, in which he refused to recognize the supernatural character of the apparitions at Garabandal. He watered down the import of the Messages and Prophecies by resorting to the principal of doctrinal integrity for the Garabandal message.

"We point out, however, that we have not found anything deserving of ecclesiastical censorship or condemnation, either in the doctrine or in the spiritual recommendations that have been publicized as having been addressed to the faithful, for those contain an exhortation to prayer and sacrifice, to eucharistic devotion, to veneration of Our Lady in traditional praiseworthy ways, and to holy fear of God offended by our sins. They simply repeat the common doctrine of the Church in these matters.

I shall now describe three phenomena associated with these events.

Miraculous Phenomena

Ecstatic Walks

The ecstatic walks began soon after the first apparition. The girls would go throughout the entire village — up and down stairways, in and out of homes, at all hours of the day and night, avoiding obstacles without faltering, guided solely by a supernatural force. Frequently, they ran at great speed up and down the steep mountainside, even backwards, so fast it was impossible for the astonished spectators to follow them. Their bodies did not seem to be subject to the law of gravity, but endowed with some sort of spiritual agility.

Those of us who are acquainted with such matters know that a class of invisible beings can manipulate the physical world, and engage in such seemingly miraculous performances. They are recognized as demons in the Bible, but only the evil kind are illustrated in the New Testament. The release of the Apostles from prison, Acts 5:19, Peter's release described in Acts 12:6, and so on, although assigned to an angel, were the physical manipulations of those beings.

The Miracle with Father Luis Andreu

The only other person to see the Vision at Garabandal was a 38-year old Spanish Jesuit Priest, Father Luis Marie Andreu. The priest had witnessed the apparitions twice before, but without himself seeing the Vision. Beyond his own curiosity, his superiors may have suggested his visits. On August 8, 1961, in the company of about 20 people in several automobiles, he came for his third and final time. The local parish Priest had to leave on another assignment and asked Father Andreu to stand in his place. Although highly skeptical of the events he accepted the request out of a sense of loyalty and duty. At 2:11 in the afternoon an ecstasy began. Conchita, concerned that there was no proof the events were real, asked the Vision for some evidence of their reality, arguing that proof had been given at Lourdes and Fatima. The Vision did not answer. Shortly before the ecstasy ended the Vision said they would have another visit that evening. For the Vision to appear twice in one day was unusual. That evening a recitation of the rosary took place in the village church. While still there another ecstasy began. In ecstatic walk the girls toured the village, praying at various locations. On other occasions this would terminate the event. Surprisingly, as the girls continued in ecstasy they ascended the steep incline leading to pine trees at the top of the hill overlooking the village. Conchita again requested proof. Again the Vision did not answer. This was Tuesday about 10:00 PM. Father Andreu was among the crowd following the children. At the pine trees they stopped, prayed, and sang a hymn. Then, as the ecstasy continued, a remarkable event took place. Father Andreu was heard shouting in a loud voice, "Milagro!" "Miracle!" He said this four times. His face turned very grave. Although the girls could not see their physical environment except for one another during an ecstasy they now suddenly saw Father Andreu with them. The ecstasy then ended. To the surprise of the crowd he testified he had seen the Vision.

He also testified to something else. He was shown the forthcoming *Great Miracle*, but the children were not. The children, in ecstasy, understood Our Lady to say to him: "*You will soon be with me.*" Visibly moved, he departed in the early morning hours with his group of people to return to his parish. He was deeply silently. His final words to his companions in the automobile were:

"Oh! What a sweet and lovely mother we have in heaven . . . how happy I am . . . what a favor The Blessed Virgin has bestowed on me. How fortunate we are to have a mother like her in heaven! There is no reason to fear the supernatural life. The girls have given us an example of how we must act with the Blessed Virgin. There is no doubt in my mind that the things involving the girls are true. Why should the Blessed Virgin have chosen us? This is the happiest day of my life."

Although, he had never had any history of serious illness, and was in excellent physical health, with those words, he bowed his head and died.

The Miracle of the Host

On May 2, 1962, the angel told Conchita that God would perform a miracle so that all people would believe: they would see the Sacred Host on her tongue at the moment of a supernatural Communion and that she would be told and should make this known fifteen days in advance. On July 18, 1962, the town was crowded with visitors. At midnight Conchita, who had remained in her home continually surrounded by visitors, entered into ecstasy and went out into the street. A short distance from her house she fell down on her knees in the midst of the crowd. Lights were focused on her. She put out her tongue upon which nothing was resting. In a few moments, a white host appeared on her tongue and remained there for a few minutes. A businessman from Barcelona, Don Alejandro Damians, standing less than three feet from the girl, secured moving pictures. In the film there appeared 79 frames of the extraordinary scene. Damians later wrote a report he submitted to the Bishop of Santander, together with a copy of the film. The number of witnesses on this occasion was very large: there were people from different cultures and social classes. Don Benjamin Gomez, a farmer from Potes, wrote:

"I was standing at less than an arm's length from the girl. I saw very well that her tongue was completely clean of everything. The girl did not move. Suddenly there appeared the Sacred Host. It was white, shining and resplendent. It reminded one of the snow when the sun strikes it with its brilliant rays. The girl's face was beautifully transformed into heavenly ecstasy. Her face was angelic. I can certify that she was motionless, moving neither hands nor tongue. In this motionless position she received the Sacred Host. We had enough time to contemplate this marvelous phenomenon without any undue haste, and many of us saw it. I was an unbeliever until that day. I am not such a Catholic as to be subject to any hallucination or imagination. I had not concerned myself about God until then, except to offend Him. I went to confession in April but previous to that time I had not gone to confession for twenty-three years."

The Messages

I shall now list the Messages given to the girls, as provided on the garabandal.org web site, and from *Our Lady Comes to Garabandal*. (Some differences exist in the references to person from the several sources.) The messages from October 18, 1961 and from June 18, 1965 are understood to be “formal” messages, while the others are classified as “informal.” No apparent formal criteria seem to exist to differentiate between the two. You can see from the content why I ignore those classifications.

October 18, 1961

We must make many sacrifices, perform much penance, and visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently. But first, we must lead good lives. If we do not, a chastisement will befall us. The cup is already filling up, and if we do not change, a very great chastisement will come upon us.

June 19, 1962

**“The Virgin told us a message for the whole world and it is this:
“The Virgin has said to us that we are not expecting the Chastisement. Because we are disregarding her first message by the way we live but without expecting punishment, it will come. Because the world has not changed and now, with this message she has said it twice and we do not heed her. Because the world is worse and must change but has not changed at all.”**

Commentary:

I personally feel it was a betrayal of truth to phrase these remarks in terms of a conditional statement. Yes, if the world would become righteous and holy the chastisement then would not occur. The Old Testament prophecies are styled in a similar fashion, but there the judgment is stated in terms of promise, rather than warning. The biblical prophecies are not styled in the hope that mankind somehow will change, but rather if it had changed. See

Ps 89:31-32

“ . . . if they violate my statutes and do not keep my commandments, then I will punish their transgression with the rod and their iniquity with scourges.”

Isa 48:18

“O that you had hearkened to my commandments! Then your peace would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”

God knows us. He knows the condition of the world, and the inability of present day humanity to live righteous lives. Did the Vision truly expect the world would change by the words from four children in a remote mountain village of Spain in less than eight

months? The scene is unreal. One might speculate that the statements were conditioned to satisfy a few people of the geographical region. But would they fare any better in their holiness than the rest of the world? Many of those who were personal witness to the events still did not believe, even though they had direct contact. Even more, the statements are global, not regional. They could not apply merely to some local geographical place.

Perhaps the Vision styled the remarks to be acceptable to the children, and their backcountry adult compatriots. Perhaps their psychology was tuned to such short time frames, and expectations. The many commentaries on the events by Catholic writers show this very psychology. The entire Catholic community shows such religious immaturity.

Or perhaps we have translation through the minds of children that distorted the actual statements and pronouncements, but this suggestion also is not adequate. The entire scenario is unreal.

In this speculative attempt to understand we must keep in mind that the statements as published have been through the hands of editors and auditors who have their own religious agendas. We may not have correct reporting.

We should also keep in mind that the Judgment of the earth was revealed at the time of Moses, and the Old Testament prophets. Hence, to cast this fact as a conditional statement was misleading. Perhaps, because the Church stifled reading and study of the Bible, the Catholic community was unaware of those truths. Then the people needed conditioning to such (for them) radical concepts.

Still another, and more forceful, possibility exists: The strong Catholic images of the Virgin Mary, the Eucharist, the Host, and the Rosary would give authenticity to the messages and the prophecies in the minds of Catholics world wide. Perhaps this was sugar coating to get promulgation of the revelations throughout the Catholic community. I, personally, cannot estimate how much the imagery detracted from the message. We must accept that celestial minds are far superior to us, and that they would know how their work would result in benefit to God.

On such grounds I would reject the Vision. But too many other crucial elements were within the visitations to be ignored. Witness the testimony of Luis Andreu and the physical phenomena associated with the apparitions.

June 23, 1962

"The Virgin has told us:

"The world continues the same . . . That it has not changed at all. FEW WILL SEE GOD. They are so few that it causes The Virgin much sorrow. What a pity that it does not change. The Virgin told us that the Chastisement is coming seeing that the

world is not changing. The cup is filling up. How sad the Virgin was although She didn't let us see it because She loves us so much and She suffers alone. She is so good! Be good everyone so that The Virgin will be happy. She told us that We who are good should pray for those who are bad. Let us pray to God for the world for those who do not know Him. Be good

. . . be very good everyone"

Maria Dolores Mazon, 13 years old Jacinta Gonzalez, 13 years old

Here we see one of the reasons for accepting the phenomenon. Without doubt, this is a true statement: FEW WILL SEE GOD. Of the billions of residents of this world, FEW WILL SEE GOD. Here we have a radical concept, but within the boundaries of the psychology of the Catholic community.

By late 1962 the apparitions had mostly stopped. They continued sporadically with some locutions and with scattered visionary events for Conchita Gonzales into 1965. Because of the wide attention many clung to any statements she made. She said that an important pronouncement was expected on June 18. More than two thousand people gathered in Garabandal — French, Germans, English, Italians, Americans and Polish, as well as Spanish. The Spanish were in the minority, perhaps due to the fact the apparitions had received practically no publicity in Spain. The French constituted the largest group. There were journalists, TV cameras from the Italian TV network, and cameramen from NO-DO (the Spanish official documentary news program).

The following is from *Our Lady Comes to Garabandal*, pg 176.

June 18, 1965

As my message of October 18 has not been complied with and has not been made known to the world, I am advising you that this is the last one. Before, the cup was filling up. Now it is flowing over. Many cardinals, many bishops and many priests are on the road to perdition and are taking many souls with them. Less and less importance is being given to the Eucharist. You should turn the wrath of God away from yourselves by your efforts. If you ask His forgiveness with sincere hearts, He will pardon you. I, your mother, through the intercession of Saint Michael the Archangel, ask you to amend your lives. You are now receiving the last warnings. I love you very much and do not want your condemnation. Pray to us with sincerity and we will grant your requests. You should make more sacrifices. Think about the passion of Jesus.

The communications terminated with this pronouncement. The girls no longer were witness to apparitions and revelations.