

GARABANDAL IS DYNAMIC:

The Prophecies of The Warning, The Miracle, The Permanent Sign, and The Chastisement - By Richard Foley, S.J.



Lady of Garabandal

anything to do with it. This is utterly false. All that the diocese in question (Santander) has officially ruled is that so far there are insufficient grounds for recognizing the supernatural explanation of what took place in Garabandal. Very significantly, however, the Bishop of Santander has since lifted the initial ban on visiting priests saying Mass in the village. Furthermore, Rome is now also investigating the whole Garabandal dossier.

Nor is it a secret that what can be called the "Padre Pio factor" is proving most influential in Garabandal's favor, not least with some Vatican officials. *For the newly beautified stigmatist strongly believed in the apparitions and encouraged people to go there on pilgrimage; besides, he bestowed his warmest favors and blessings on Conchita (the principal visionary) when she visited him. Also worth noting is that Mother Teresa believed in Garabandal, as do mystics like Vassula and Christina Gallagher.*

Power, energy, strong and decisive action - these are qualities commonly linked with the word "dynamic." And, as we shall see, they apply very particularly to what Our Lady promised in Garabandal. The place itself, though, is anything but dynamic. For it is an unbelievably obscure and sleepy little village nestling among the hills of northern Spain. But in the early 60s it received from the Mother of God a prophetic and exciting new destiny when she appeared there on numerous occasions to four girls not yet in their teens, making them her mouthpieces to all mankind of an urgent message from heaven.

Before going any further, let us be assured that we are perfectly entitled to believe in and speak about Garabandal. Also we may legitimately go there on private pilgrimage. In this respect Garabandal is in the same situation as Medjugorje. That is to say, the Church has as yet given neither its official approval nor disapproval while the whole matter remains under investigation. Meanwhile, however, we are free to believe in the supernatural nature of the Garabandal events and message, pending the Church's final decision.

Opposition and Blessed Padre Pio

Sadly enough, some misinformed critics maintain that Garabandal has been condemned by the local bishop and that we are therefore forbidden to have



The four visionaries - Mari Loli, Conchita, Jacinta and Mary Cruz at the time of the Apparitions

Why "Dynamic"?

What, then, explains Garabandal's dynamic character? What accounts for the special power, energy and decisive action which so distinguishes it among Marian apparitions? The answer lies in the prophecies made there by the Queen of Prophets herself.

These prophecies are four in number; we know them as the *Warning, the Miracle, the Permanent Sign, and the Chastisement*. Like spiritual time bombs they are steadily and unstoppably ticking away the seconds till they reach their respective terms. The resultant grace-explosions will be mighty in their effects, shedding divine blessings far and wide across the entire world. Let us look briefly look at each of the four prophecies in turn.

The Warning

This will truly be a mega-event happening on a global scale; that it, will directly affect every single person alive on earth at the time. *Ac-*

ording to what Our Lady told the visionaries, the warning will be sparked off by some natural phenomenon coming directly from God. And it will produce within each and every human being alive when it occurs a brilliant illumination of conscience, enabling them to see their sinful selves as they actually are in God's sight.

Doubtless that experience will be for every individual one of us a shattering moment of truth, and surely something of a salutary shock as well. For, on beholding in the divine light the shadowy sinscape of our lives past and present, we are bound to feel the most heartfelt contrition for having offended so good and holy a Lord, and will fervently purpose amendment.

What this amounts to saying, then, is that every single one of the six billion human beings currently inhabiting Planet Earth is destined to receive from our merciful and loving Father a supergrace of profound repentance for the past and firm commitment for the future. In other

words, in every person breathing God's air when it happens, the Warning will bring about the conversion experience of a lifetime. *Thus in effect it will trigger off nothing less than a worldwide holiness explosion, the equivalent of a planetary Pentecost.*

How Will Mankind React?

You can bet your life, though, that some people will be hard-hearted and cynical enough to resist even so powerful a grace. Indeed, some resisters will even attempt to rationalize and rubbish the whole phenomenon in terms of collective hallucination or pan-fantasy or pseudo-conscientization or some such. Be sure that psychological jargon stands to be enriched with some priceless and bizarre neologisms. But for the majority of mankind the warning will undoubtedly be to varying degrees something of a Damascus Road experience. That, is, those in a state of grace will be spurred by the warning's inspiration to reach thereafter for the stars of ho-

liness, while prodigals not in God's friendship will be powerfully drawn back to our loving Father's house.

In a word, then, *the post-warning world will assuredly witness large-scale gains for God and His kingdom, with churches being packed as never before and priests becoming heavily in demand for confession and counseling. We may also confidently expect a significant rise in vocations. And, please God, many of those prelates, priests and lay people who sin so grievously against the virtue of faith by denying or doubting Catholic doctrines will be moved by the grace of the warning to submit humbly to the Church's teaching authority.*

The Miracle

According to the visionaries, this second prophecy will be fulfilled within twelve months of the Warning. Conchita, our main informant, has been authorized by Our Lady to disclose the following data concerning the promised miracle.

It will take place above the grove of pine-trees that stand on a hillock overlooking Garabandal.

It will be the greatest miracle Our Lord has ever worked, far exceeding the Fatima miracle of the sun.

It will occur at 8:30 p.m. on a Thursday that happens to fall between the 8th and 16th of March, April or May.

It's date will coincide not only with the feast of a Eucharistic martyr but with an important event in the Church's calendar.

All unbelievers within sight of the miracle will be converted and the sick will be healed.

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Russia and the world will in consequence be moved to conversion.

What form, we may well wonder, will the miracle take? We really have no positive idea beyond that it is bound to be stunning. Maybe we can assume, however, that both the Eucharistic Jesus and His Mother - the joint principals, so to call them, in the Garabandal drama - will occupy center stage. And, because St. Michael the Archangel played a prominent role in the apparitions, he, too, could well be included along with the principals in the miraculous spectacle.

Interestingly enough, the miracle in question was conceivably foretold to another visionary some 30 years before the Garabandal apparitions. For on February 22, 1931, Blessed Faustina made the following entry in her diary:

"The Lord manifested himself to me today and said: 'Before coming as the just Judge, I shall come as the King of Mercy. Before Judgment Day arrives there will appear a sign in the heavens and over the earth. That sign will be the Sign of the Cross, and from each of the wounds in my hands and feet there will issue a bright light that will illumine the whole earth for a few minutes.'"

When Will the Miracle Take Place?

Conchita, and she alone, knows the exact date of the miracle and has been instructed by the Mother of God to announce it eight days in advance. Meanwhile we can only speculate about its date. Nor are we tempting Providence in doing so. Quite the contrary, in fact. For wasn't it Our Lady of Garabandal herself who virtually encouraged us to speculate about the miracle "when" by providing us temptingly with the above mentioned clues?

As a matter of recent fact, the speculation about the date in question happened to focus very directly on Thursday, May 13, of this present year; indeed, a good many Garabandal devotees were convinced that this day met all the required criteria. For, besides being Ascension Thursday, it was the feast of Blessed Imelda Lambertini, a 14th-century "martyr" of the Eucharist. In addition, the year 1999 fell neatly within the time-plan referred to by Our Lady in a locution to Father Stefano Gobbi in 1988. This present decade, she foretold, would see the fulfillment of all the events she has predicted in her various apparitions - including, therefore, the Garabandal ones.

But as May 13 drew nearer and nearer, hopes started to fade because the warning, which must precede the miracle, failed to materialize. Finally, and to widespread disappointment, Ascension Thursday came and went miracle-less.

Far from being discouraged, though, we still firmly believe in the promised miracle. And, again taking our cue from Our Lady, we shall continue to speculate about its likely date. Indeed, let me immediately strike while the iron's hot and propose next April 13 as a distinct possibility. For, besides being a

Thursday, it is the feast of St. Hermenegild, a young Spanish prince in the 6th century who suffered martyrdom for refusing to receive Holy Communion from an heretical bishop. And April 13 could easily coincide with some significant event still awaiting its fulfillment in the Church's life.

But what about the Father Gobbi time frame? Can the year 2000 be fitted into it somehow? Yes, at a stretch it can if we adjust our arithmetic a little and consider 2000 as the final year of the present decade.

Bear in mind that the warning will precede the miracle. Which means that we'll be given a certain amount of advance notice. But also bear in mind that "...within a year" could mathematically be anything from twelve months to one day or even a few hours.

The Miracle's Impact

Though only those within sight of the Garabandal pine-grove will actually witness the miracle, it will be captured on numerous TV cameras and flashed across myriad screens in every continent. For we can expect that most of the major international TV networks, despite the agnosticism and mockery many might feel regarding the promised miracle, will nevertheless send a crew to cover proceedings.

Thanks therefore to modern global communications, Our Lady's assurance that the miracle will help to convert Russia was no mere idle rhetoric. *The same applies to Our Lord's enlargement on that prediction, which He made in a subsequent locution to Conchita: the entire world, He said, would be converted by the miracle.*



Conchita now

The Permanent Sign

Closely connected with the miracle prophecy and due to follow in its immediate wake, the sign, Our Lady told the visionaries, will appear above the pine-grove overlooking Garabandal and remain there permanently and indestructibly. Thus till the end of time it will bear glowing testimony to the truth of the apparitions and act as a sacrament of God's power and redeeming love. It will also act as a magnet for pilgrims from all over the world. They will flock in their tens of thousands to witness this prodigy of divine power and to invoke the intercession of God's Mother and ours. Thus Garabandal will say goodbye forever to its village status and rapidly become, like Lourdes and Fatima, a bustling Mariopolis.

What form, then, will the sign take? We really have no idea, though Conchita once likened it to a vapor or mist. This has prompted the very interesting theory that the sign will resemble a pillar of cloud by day and become fiery at night. If so, it will hold a very special significance for the Jewish nation in particular. Let us never forget that St. Paul has prophesied their wholesale conversion to the Christian faith before the end of the world.

The Chastisement

Our Lady of Garabandal's fourth prophecy is not absolute like the others but conditional. That is to say, it will serve to punish our world only if it responds inadequately to the superabundant graces flowing from the warning and the miracle.

So this particular time bomb has the equivalent of a switch-off device structured into its mechanism. And whether or not it will explode or be switched off depends on how well or badly the grace-explosions that preceded it.

The young Garabandal visionaries were actually given a glimpse of the chastisement - if it does in the event come - and were visibly horror-struck. Words failed them afterwards to describe the extent and degree of punishment God will visit upon our world if it persists in its sinfulness and ingratitude.

The chastisement scenario happens to chime in with what Our Lady said warningly in Fatima and again in Akita. Please God, sufficient prayers and sacrifices on our part will avail to stay the hand of divine justice and persuade it to switch off this final and unthinkable time bomb.

Two Special Patrons

Finally, let me recommend two patrons who are key players in the Garabandal scenario. First was the young Jesuit Father Luis Andreu. He was intimately involved, even receiving a preview of the miracle shortly before he died of sheer joy. The second is Blessed Padre Pio, who was also granted a preview of the miracle before his death. Ask these two, above all, to bless your plans for making it to Garabandal when the miracle is announced.

(We highly recommend Father Foley's new book Mary and the Eucharist.)