

Everything Will Come in Due Time

An interview with Serafin Gonzalez

Serafin Gonzalez is the oldest brother of visionary Conchita Gonzalez Keena and a witness to many of the Garabandal events. On April 11, 1993, Easter Sunday, while The Workers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Pilgrimage group was in Garabandal, one of the tour members, Marc Conza of Florida, asked Serafin if he would mind being interviewed. Serafin graciously consented and so with his bilingual daughter, Conchita, as interpreter, the interview was conducted on the front porch of the Meson Serafin, the inn run by Serafin and his family.

So much has changed in Garabandal since the apparitions such as all these new houses for example. Has it been easy to adjust or do you wish things would remain simple?

Serafin: It's a normal consequence of what happened here. People come here, they like it so they build a house. They come from all over.

Who is the present pastor and how long has he been here?

Serafin: Father Juan Gonzalez and he's been here for many years.

Was he a witness to the events?

Serafin: Not all of them but most of them.

What is his current attitude?

Serafin: He still believes the same as when the apparitions were taking place. He has the same faith and he hopes all the prophecies that have been made will be fulfilled.

What was your reaction when the pastor announced that the restrictions had been lifted on the priests?

Serafin: I think that on the part of the [previous] Bishop, Juan Antonio del Val Gallo, it was a very good thing to lift the restrictions on priests. It was very right and fair that the priests should be able to come and say the Mass here.

Serafin, right, often accompanied his sister, Conchita, during her ecstatic marches through the village.

we felt. They did everything in a good, positive way.

How did this investigation compare with the first one in 1961?

Serafin: The first investigation was a bit on the negative side and they did very little to find out the truth. I think the second investigation would have been much more useful if it had been done at the time of the apparitions. *Who were the most recent investigators?*

Serafin: I don't remember their names. They were specialists on different subjects sent by the Bishop. Two or three asked me questions and they did the same with the other people in the village. They asked specific questions. Everything was complete and they wrote it all down. They went all over the village and some stayed for several days. They came here doing their job, but some told me,

What about the most recent investigation?

Serafin: It was all right. It's good that they have tried to recover the information but it's a bit too late. This was not the fault of the investigators because they were very good people; they did a good job. They asked everything: If we doubt, if we believe, what we have seen, and what





With tape recorder in hand, Marc Conza questions Serafin through his English-speaking daughter, Conchita.

"We have to come back here but on our own." They were very nice people, very kind, very polite.

During the time of the apparitions, the pastor of the village, Father Valentin Marichalar, was removed. Why was that?

Serafin: Possibly it was on orders from the Bishop because it was thought he believed in the apparitions. After Father Valentin, they only sent priests who were negative.

Who was the priest who succeeded Father Valentin?

Serafin: I'm not sure now. It was either Father Olano or Father Amador.

Conchita (Serafin's daughter who served as translator): Father Amador did believe in the events. He told my father.

Did he believe from the beginning?

Serafin: No, but the first time he saw an ecstasy of Conchita, he came up to me when it was over, and said, "I saw an ecstasy of your sister and it was a perfect ecstasy. It is very possible that Our Lady is granting us a special grace but we have to be careful because everybody comes to the girls and they write letters to them. Everybody loves them but it could all be lost, lost in vanity. But it is very probable that Our Lady is granting us a grace." Father Amador was here for a very short time. He was replaced, possibly because he may have gone to Santander afterwards and said he changed his opinion [to belief in the apparitions].

It has been reported that during the apparitions, the Virgin told Conchita

there were people living in outer space or on other planets. Can you say anything about this?

Serafin: I remember having heard that. I personally think that all those spaces or other worlds referred to meant those places where the angels, the saints or souls in purgatory dwelt. *Do you remember the day in 1962 when the King and Queen of Belgium came to Garabandal?*

Serafin: Nobody knows for sure if they were here. At the time it was said that King Bedouin and Queen Fabiola were here but sort of in disguise, not revealing their true identities.

What did the Virgin say to the girls about fashions?

Serafin: She told them that fashions drag people to hell and that they should dress with decency and modesty if they want to be saved. These were her words. This was said in songs that the Virgin taught them when they were in ecstasy. (Serafin sings a few lines of the song.) The message of that little song, or that little insertion, is much more meaningful now than it was then when you consider the disaster all around [with the fashions]. It didn't make as much sense back then as it does now.

Our Lady appeared at Garabandal as Our Lady of Mount Carmel. Did she say anything about wearing the scapular?

Serafin: I don't remember her words exactly but I do recall that she said by wearing it, many people will be saved.

She said that here at Garabandal?

Serafin: Yes, yes. I don't know the exact words but I know the meaning was that—guarding us or our salvation; something like that. But she spoke it here.

Conchita: When my grandmother died [she is referring to Aniceta, the mother of Serafin and visionary Conchita] my Aunt Conchita had the corpse brought here for the wake. A man from Zaragoza came to pay his respects. He was a good man but he wouldn't go to Mass or practice his faith. But he believed in Garabandal. My father recalls that the first thing my Aunt Conchita said was, "Put the scapular on him." So she gives great importance to it.

In 1961, the Church removed a number of saints from the calendar. Many people mistakenly thought they weren't saints any more and that there was no chance that they could ever be placed on the calendar again. Did Our Lady ever kiss, say, St. Christopher medals? St. Christopher was one of the saints dropped from the calendar.

Serafin: I don't remember for sure. [Interviewer's note: I was able to question another villager, Aurelia Gonzalez, aunt of Serafin and Conchita, about this same subject and she told me very firmly and without hesitation, "Oh yes! The Virgin kissed many medals of San Cristóbal" (Christopher).]

It's been reported that the girls' weight changed when they were in ecstasy. Didn't you have some experience of that?

Serafin: Yes, they were very heavy, much more so than normally. Something else similar to that weight change was the ecstatic "runs." They would run with their arms stretched out in the form of a cross with their heads facing upwards and it was very

On the porch of the Meson Serafin where the interview was conducted, Serafin and his wife, Paquita, stand with their three daughters, from left: Mercedes, Conchita and Fatima. They also have a son, Manuel.



difficult to keep up with them although in the normal state I was much faster than they were. But when they were in ecstasy, I found it hard to keep up with them.

Another thing, another miracle, was how they came down from the pines on their knees without looking where they were going. They never looked where they were placing their knees but it seemed as though someone had put their hands over their knees because they were very clean, without scratches, cuts or anything. And sometimes they came down waist deep in snow! It was extraordinary.

When the girls said the rosary in ecstasy, did they say the prayer that Our Lady taught to the visionaries of Fatima (O my Jesus, forgive us our sins...)?

Serafin: I think so but I'm not sure. I seem to remember, yes, but I can't say with certainty. It was a real privilege and a wonder to listen to the rosaries the girls prayed with Our Lady because she led them so they could pray very slowly and peacefully. It was a real gift to listen and to join in those rosaries. It was beautiful. *Did they say 15 decades or just five?*

Serafin: I think it was five, at least five, but I can't say for sure.

How does it feel to know that the Blessed Virgin has come to your village, your house and your sister?

Serafin: It's difficult to explain because when you try to think of reasons why Our Lady came here, to my sister, you realize it is something that is out of your reach. I don't know how or why.

What do you think of the changes in the Church since the time of the apparitions?

Serafin: Since Vatican II it has been very difficult. There is a lot of confusion among the people.

Do you remember the Virgin saying there will never be another world war?

Serafin: I'm almost sure that Our Lady told Conchita there wouldn't be an atomic war, at least. That's why the Warning is very clear to me. The Warning will be worldwide; everyone will realize it is God's work and not something of human origin. Nobody will get hurt; it will be a preparation of conscience. It's all connected. First, there will not be an atomic war—I heard this from Conchita—because the Warning is something that will frighten people, panic people. It's clear to me that in the Warning you will feel fear, and feel panic, but you will know it comes from God. It is something that will prepare one's conscience because the people at that time, when the Warning comes, will not be worthy to receive the Miracle. *The Warning will first appear in the sky and then enter into each person's soul, isn't that right?*

Serafin: As Conchita says, yes. The world will be afraid, but its purpose will be to purify consciences because, according to Our Lady, the conscience of the world will be very bad at that time.

I'm sure you are aware the world is getting worse instead of better.

Serafin: In a spiritual way. *How long do you think God is going to allow the situation to deteriorate before He steps in with the Warning?*

Serafin: I cannot imagine a situation like that. Maybe we're not bad enough yet; maybe it's going to get worse. Around Spain, for example, I

see that spiritually and morally everything is in decay.

How do you think great numbers of people will be able to get here for the Miracle with only eight days' notice?

Serafin: It won't be easy! Not everybody will be able to come. But there will be time. We have fast communications nowadays. Those who do come will have the job of explaining to others what happened here by broadcasting it through television, for example. God knows the whole world will not be able to come here. But personally, and this is only my personal conviction, I think the world will be so bad after the Warning, so unmoved, that people won't be interested in coming.

Even after the Warning?

Serafin: Maybe there aren't so many people who are interested. Maybe their consciences are too bad. We cannot imagine what it's going to be like at that time. I know that if our Blessed Mother has already warned us that it will be that bad—unshaken consciences—imagine how bad and how hard those hearts will be.

What would you tell people who say it's been 32 years now and still the Warning and Miracle haven't happened?

Serafin: You have to hope and to wait with patience. I'm sure these things will happen, but which generation will be a witness to these events, I don't know. Our Lady told us they will come and everything will come in due time and I believe they will come. □

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