

# Through the Eyes of a Missionary

*Fr. Gerald (Gerry) Farrell, a native New Yorker, was ordained as a Maryknoll Missionary priest in June, 1957. Of his 29 years of service to the Lord, 21 of them have been spent in Korea. In 1983, after having spent some years in Rhode Island and New York at Bethany House, he was re-assigned to Korea, and this past summer he was back in Brooklyn, New York, where his mother and sister live, for his periodic vacation that comes every three years.*

*Fr. Farrell believes that the events of Garabandal are from God and on July 15, 1986, Marie FitzPatrick of our editorial staff interviewed him about the subject. His reflections from the point of view of a missionary, on the impact of the Warning and Miracle, offer a perspective that perhaps many of us had not considered.*

**Q. How did you learn about Garabandal?**

**A.** I heard about Garabandal through Fr. [Joseph] Pelletier's book, *Our Lady Comes to Garabandal*. Bethany House was first located in the diocese of Providence, not far from Fr. Pelletier's home in Worcester, Massachusetts. When, in 1975, we heard that Father had had a heart attack, we visited him in the hospital. It was then that I learned of the Garabandal book and began to read it. Over the next four years I visited him several times with other priests and learned much more about the events from him.

**Q. Have you ever met Conchita?**

**A.** Yes, many times. After Bethany House moved to Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, I met a layman at a conference who asked me what was the nature of the work we were doing. I answered, "Intercession for priests." He remarked that he goes to a Holy Hour for priests at the home of Conchita Keena in Queens, New

*Marie FitzPatrick with Fr. Gerry Farrell. As a missionary, Fr. Farrell has been deeply impressed by the Garabandal events and Messages, and has visited the village itself where he stayed for several days.*

York, and if I'd like to go sometime, he would be glad to take me along. So, I took him up on his offer and we went there on Thursday, June 18, 1981. (Now the Holy Hours are conducted on Fridays.) On the way, I realized that it was the twentieth anniversary of the first apparition at

Garabandal. I congratulated Conchita who looked puzzled at first, and then smiled. After the Holy Hour, she brought out a cake with "Happy 20th Anniversary" on it.

Since Conchita's was only a 45 minute ride from Bethany, I often went and brought many priest guests along. Nearly all the members of the House went down one time or another. They were impressed by the serious nature of the Holy Hour, the prayers for priests and the fidelity of the people to the Holy Hour. I was impressed by Conchita as a humble servant, very simple and direct, someone that Our Lady would like to speak through and who would give the Messages just as she heard them.

**Q. Have you also met the other visionaries?**

**A.** I met Mari Loli and her family when I returned from a trip to Garabandal in 1982. I told her about recent events in the village, and she was interested. I was impressed with her humility and simplicity.



*"It will be an event unique in the history of mankind."*

**Q. How did you happen to meet Joey?**

**A.** Through a mutual friend, Fr. Carl Hammer of Albuquerque, New Mexico. Father Carl had had Joey to his parish to speak on Garabandal, so when Father came as a guest to Bethany House in late 1981, we went together to visit Joey at his home. A year later I joined Joey's pilgrimage to Guadalupe, Mexico, where we celebrated at the shrine his fifth wedding anniversary and my twenty-fifth anniversary of ordination.

**Q. As a missionary, what did you find noteworthy about Garabandal that has inspired you to promote the Messages?**

**A.** There are several phenomena connected with Garabandal that are exceptionally outstanding. What I found most remarkable was Our Lady herself, her person, her domesticity and approachability compared with some of the former apparitions. At Lourdes she was in a niche, at Fatima above the Holm Oak tree and at Guadalupe standing on the hill. But at Garabandal, she's very domestic, very motherly, often appearing in many of the houses, in all their little lanes, the church, the cemetery, and at the pines. She wanted to be with her children in every place and situation even to playing hide and seek with them. I think the approachable and maternal warmth was the most notable thing to me.

*At this point in the interview, Fr. Farrell spoke at length on key topics.*

**The Eucharistic Message**

The next important aspect for me, having to do with my apostolate of establishing Perpetual Adoration in parishes in Korea, is the stress the Blessed Virgin Mary put upon the importance of the Eucharist and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. The first

public Message to "visit the Blessed Sacrament frequently" and the bemoaning of the fact in the second Message "That less and less importance is being given to the Blessed Sacrament" is significant. Of course, the action of having the children fed with the Eucharist by St. Michael the Archangel whenever there was no priest in the village and using as the confirmatory prodigy the Eucharistic Miracle of the Visible Host, is very remarkable.

**The Warning and Miracle**

In the message of Fatima in 1917, Our Lady said that if her warning were not heeded, Russia would spread its errors throughout the world. This has happened. Increasing numbers of people are not able to be contacted by missionaries because country after country has become communistic. There are now hundreds of millions of people who have no way of hearing the Gospel message. In China alone, where one billion people make up one-sixth of the world's population, preaching of the Gospel is strictly prohibited. To this can be added many other Communist nations that are closed to missionaries plus those where the state religion is Buddhism, Mohammedanism or Hinduism and where Christian evangelization is forbidden. Thus the situation confronting the missionary today is much more serious than it was in 1917.

I believe that two prophecies given by Our Lady at Garabandal reveal God's beautiful antidote to this situation. These prophecies tell us that God, through a sovereign act of His mercy, is going to give everyone, regardless of their present relationship with God, an opportunity for conversion. The two events prophesied by Our Lady are designed to bring about the elements essential to

every conversion, those found in the very first words preached by Our Lord: "Repent and believe the Gospel."

The Warning, the first of the events, is designed to bring about our repentance. In this event everyone at the same time, believer and non-believer alike, will see his relationship with God in a moment of truth and will be given the opportunity to repent of his sins. It will be an event unique in the history of mankind. God is doing it simply because He is a loving Father who sees our need and has chosen to respond to it in this way.

The Miracle, the second event, is designed to bring about or deepen our faith in the Gospel, i.e., our faith in Jesus Christ because it will clearly be He Who is working this Miracle, and it will point to His true Church. As with the Warning, the benefits of this Miracle will be available to all. In God's providence it will occur in our age of instant global communication. Many will see it directly and the rest will be quickly informed of it. Since all will have experienced the Warning, those who repent will be disposed to believe in Jesus and His Miracle, thus completing their basic conversion.

How many will repent and believe? Only God knows the answer to this question. But certainly there will be many, and this will create a huge demand for missionaries to teach the Gospel truths to those who are newly converted, welcoming them into the Church. In other words, we can look forward to a glorious period of evangelization in the near future. □

*In the April-June 1987 issue, Fr. Farrell will speak about Korea, its people, the growth of the Catholic faith there, his apostolate and the promotion of the Garabandal Message in Korea.*

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