

“THE ECSTASIES MADE ME CRY”

ON OCTOBER 18, 1997, THIRTY-SIXTH ANNIVERSARY OF the first formal Message of Garabandal, Julia Mazon, mother of visionary Mari Loli LaFleur, died in the village of Garabandal at the age of 75. She is survived by five children and several grandchildren.

In 1961, during the apparitions, Our Lady foretold that Julia's life would be marked by suffering. She lived to see the fulfillment of that prophecy. In 1974 she became a widow when her husband, Ceferino, died of cancer at the age of 55. In 1996, she suffered the untimely death of her son, Gustavo, who was just 28.

On August 23, 1978, after attending the First International Congress on Garabandal at Lourdes, France, members of the GARABANDAL Magazine staff visited Garabandal and were able to interview Julia. They were impressed by her humility and sincerity and the candor with which she answered questions. She smiled and laughed and often her eyes welled up with tears as she recounted the days of the apparitions—days filled with excitement, wonder and fear.

As our tribute to Julia, we are presenting here the 1978 interview in its entirety. And we ask all our readers to remember the repose of the soul of this devoted wife and mother who also happened to be the parent of a visionary.



Julia with Mari Loli around 1971.

Q. Before the apparitions began, what kind of a life did Mari Loli lead?

A. Very ordinary, like any other girl. As a child she never wanted to wear short dresses and had to have her skirts all the way down to her feet. Once when the seamstress had made her a dress, Loli told her, “make it very long.” Then when I went to wash it I found she had undone the hem to make it even longer. Seeing this, I would scold her as I had a lot of work to do with four small children and I didn't feel like sewing it up again. When she grew older, she was just like any other girl and didn't worry any more about her dresses being longer or shorter.

Q. What was your first reaction when Mari Loli came home on June 18, 1961, and told you she had seen an angel?

A. Not too good, because when she came home it was late. Even though it was not quite dark, she was supposed to come home while there was still daylight and sunshine. I scolded her

and did not want to listen to her. The next day as she left to go out, she tried to speak to me but as I was angry with her I did not want to listen to her. Then one day I went out to the street and a lady said to me, “Listen, what they are saying about the girls is true.” After hearing this I called my husband to the kitchen and said, “Ceferino, that lady has said to me . . .” and he said, “Away with that, away with that.” Another day all the people who had seen the girls came here relating what they had seen. The following day Ceferino went to see but he did not let me go. He said, “You stay here.” When they all returned—oh, such faces, even the ones who did not care about going to Mass or saying the rosary, came back crying.

Q. When you did see your daughter in ecstasy, how did it affect you?

A. Well, her face changed entirely and I looked at her as if she were not my daughter. I wouldn't know how to explain it. I felt as if I were alone, as though my daughter were absent.

When she was in ecstasy, I would not talk to her or touch her, but . . . nothing, nothing, she did not move and I felt as if I were alone.

Q. Can you tell us of any one particular ecstasy when you were present and which stands out in your mind?

A. One night Mari Loli was to receive Communion from the archangel Saint Michael at the door of the Church. This was to be in the middle of the night. It was snowing very hard and I had to get out of bed to go with her because her father was so tired and he was ready to let her go out alone. But we never permitted her to be unaccompanied, so I got up and went with her. We were laughing as we walked because we would fall down and had to hold on to each other. When we arrived at the porch of the Church she fell on her knees in ecstasy. It was so dark. I was panicky and so frightened because some were saying it might be the devil. But she was there praying and smiling. She was fine. When I came back home

I said to my husband, "I am never going to go with her again. If you do not accompany her, I am locking the door and she is not going out."

Q. *What was your impression when you started seeing Mari Loli in the ecstatic marches, the falls, or when she would fall backwards?*

A. And she would hit her knees, too! She used to walk down the street in ecstasy when it was full of water or come down sort of like sitting. I do not know how to explain it. Back then I suffered very much, terribly.

Q. *Did you ever see Loli fall back and hit her head on a stone?*

A. Yes, yes, I truly did. But I'll tell you, I only went along with her a few times. It was her father who went with her more often. On many occasions I did see things that would make me cry and I would say, "Oh, Lord, nothing else."

Q. *Could you tell us of a particular instance that made you cry?*

A. One day there had been a freeze and it seemed as if it were going to snow as it was very cold. It was about 5 o'clock in the morning, the village was covered with mud and I watched Loli, on her knees, walk through the streets. It was so muddy that one might think she would have been covered all over with mud. I then went to a very dark corner to cry. She was unable to see me because people were surrounding her. I was crying because it was so cold and it seemed to me she was going to get ill. Then I would say to myself, while I

cried, "Blessed Virgin, I cannot stand this any longer, do not allow her to continue dragging herself on her knees."

Suddenly, all those who were watching heard her say to the Virgin, "Ah! You say my mother is crying, oh, my mother is crying." I was a few meters away from her and as it was very dark those who were there could not see me. They finally found me, crying. As I said, I cried because I thought she would get ill.

Q. *Did she get ill?*

A. No, No, nothing.

Q. *Did you ever see Mari Loli during ecstasy in any unusual positions?*

A. Yes, several times. Once, I saw all four girls coming down the entire staircase head first.

Q. *How did they do that?*

A. I don't know how to explain it. They kept their hands at their sides so their skirts would not come up. Their bodies were in a marvelous position and they came down with their faces looking upwards. They were on their backs.

Q. *You saw all four girls coming down that way?*

A. Yes, yes, and more than once.

Q. *What happened when they got to the bottom of the stairs?*

A. Nothing. I don't know how to explain it. Nothing would happen. They came down the stairs, neither fast nor slow, they just came down. Once they reached the floor it was just the same as when they were coming down the stairs. You could not notice any bruises

or anything.

Q. *When they got to the bottom of the stairs, what position were they in?*

A. They remained flat, facing upwards.

Q. *Did you ever see your daughter levitate off the ground?*

A. Well, I don't know exactly. Once she was in a position in which she seemed not to be touching the ground but I never tried to place my hand to see whether she was off the ground or not.

Q. *After an apparition ended would Mari Loli tell you what the Virgin or Saint Michael had said to her?*

A. Perhaps some people would ask questions but I would not ask anything. Her father asked more. The night when I accompanied her to the church so she could receive Communion from Saint Michael, I did not even tell her that I was scared.

The Commission

Q. *How did the Commission of Santander treat your daughter?*

A. I think they treated her well. They made tests. I did not see them but my husband told me. He said they lifted the girls and then let them fall, because when they were in ecstasy they were very heavy.

Q. *Did you ever see the members of the Commission prick them with pins or punch them?*

A. No. Once I saw the girls on their knees for two or three hours. They were where the apple tree was and there were a lot of people. I was close



Left, the 1978 interview. From left, Charles Mallioux, Julia, translator, Consuelo Bascuas, and Ann Dugo. Above, Ceferino.



Jacinta and Mari Loli in ecstasy, 1962.

to them with my husband. We could not see what it was the members of the Commission were doing. When the ecstasy was over, the girls' legs were all pricked. That day they pricked them so much that Jacinta was touching the ground with only one knee. All of us who were close were able to observe that for one hour she had one knee on the ground and the other one in the air. That was the day they had their legs pricked around the calf. Otherwise, whether they went through the streets on their knees or sitting, I never saw a wound on them. All that made me suffer very much. I have never believed that anyone hit the girls and things like that, no, no.

Q. *Did the Commission ever call on you as a witness?*

A. No, not me. My husband was the one who went to Santander with Mari Loli. When she was here in the village he would be with her. For many days my husband kept her in the house and wouldn't let people see her.

Personal Signs

Q. *Did you ever ask Our Lady for a personal sign?*

A. Yes. One day I was breast-feeding my month old baby in my bedroom. The family, Mari Loli and everyone else were having dinner in the kitchen. My house was packed with people

waiting to see if Mari Loli would have an ecstasy. Then I heard more excitement and more people were coming toward my house. I put the baby in her crib to go down to see what was happening. The house was so crowded with people that I couldn't even approach the staircase. The people said that Mari Cruz was in ecstasy and that she was coming toward my kitchen. Back then, I was having many doubts and I thought momentarily, without even seeing Mari Cruz, "Most Blessed Virgin, if this is true, out of all the people that are here, may she give me, and only me, the crucifix to kiss." I was in the middle of the stairs and the place was full, full of people. She could not see me and I could not see her. As Mari Cruz started toward me, some even grabbed her by the hand to take the cross to their lips to kiss it, but no, she did not give it to anyone else. She came directly to me as soon as I had made the petition. She crossed the room and gave me the crucifix to kiss. I went upstairs, crying. Afterwards I was sorry and became very despondent. A lady who saw me asked, "What's the matter?" I told her I had asked for proof and it impressed me so much that I thought I had been too selfish. I was totally satisfied but the fact that the proof was just as I had requested, made me fearful.

Q. *Did Ceferino, your husband, ever ask for a personal sign?*

A. I don't know. Perhaps he did, but I don't know.

Q. *Your husband went through a period of great doubts during the apparitions. Did he believe again before he died?*

A. Yes. Oh, yes! He had great faith in the Virgin. Truly yes, because he suffered intensely. Many times he would ask the Virgin, "My mother most holy, take me away."

Various Topics

Q. *In 1962, were you present for the "night of the screams"??**

A. Oh yes. But no one could describe it. Their reactions became indescribable from seeing such a terrible thing. We were not permitted to be close to them and had to stay farther back. No one went to bed that night, no one in the village. The following day, practically the whole village went to confession.

Q. *Did Mari Loli describe to you what she saw?*

A. I didn't get to see her that night because the girls were at the pines (where the apparition took place) all night long.

Q. *What was your reaction when Mari Loli began having doubts about the apparitions even to the point of denying them?*

A. I suffered much, very much! But for a long time now, do not ask me why, I have believed that it is all true.

Q. Was there anything in particular that the Virgin told Mari Loli that impressed you deeply?

A. Yes. It was an ecstasy in the kitchen of my home. There were four or five persons there. I did not witness it but my husband did. When he came up to bed he said to me, "She had a beautiful ecstasy. She was crying and crying during the ecstasy. Her face reflected such an expression of suffering. She was saying, 'We have to make many sacrifices for priests.'"

Q. Sacrifices for priests?

A. Yes, sacrifices for priests. She had to tell everyone so that they would pray. She said that times of great doubt and confusion were to come, even to the priests. I scolded her very much for that and I made her cry . . . she cried so bitterly.

Q. Why did you scold her?

A. Because it seemed to me that a priest by being just a priest, was already holy. I said to her, "Well, you pray for us because we need it more than they do." She looked at me with such an expression on her face.

Q. In what year did this take place?

A. In 1961, when they began having the apparitions separately.

Q. Did Mari Loli ever say anything about the Pope?

A. What I heard from her was that the Pope would see the Miracle. [Editor's Note: The complete prophecy concerning the Pope and the Miracle states that "he will see the Miracle from wherever he is."] As far as saying anything precisely, no. What she used to say all the time was, "pray for the Church." This she would always ask people to do.

Q. Did Mari Loli ever tell you that you would have much to suffer?

A. Yes. She told us we were going to suffer very much. She would say this in ecstasy, "Ah, my parents will have much to suffer?" She said that our life

here in this world would be, from now on, nothing but suffering. It seemed to me that I could not suffer again as much as I was suffering then, but I have had greater sufferings. Now, on reflection, those times seem to have been marvelous.

Q. Do you remember if these words of Mari Loli ever came back to give you strength during some great trial?

A. Yes, at the time when she left for the United States. When she was leaving home, I don't know what was the matter with me. Her father and I talked about it more than once. We would say that it seemed as if the house were in mourning. Loli was always singing,



Mari Loli, offering a rosary to her vision, and Mari Cruz in ecstasy during the first months of the apparitions in 1961.

laughing and she was a very happy person, very, very happy.

Q. Do you hear from her often?

A. Yes. Right now she wants me to go over there and says she misses me. But I'm not going to go. Not yet anyway.**

Q. What do you think of the Warning and the great Miracle for which the world is waiting?

A. You know what I think? I think that first something terrible is going to happen, because the girls always said this, you know.

Q. You mean in the Church?

A. In the Church and in the world because that same night my husband said she had cried so much in the kitchen, it was because the Virgin was saying that it seemed we were getting worse, that nobody was changing. And Mari Loli

cried and prayed and asked the Virgin to give her whatever sufferings she wanted to give her, but not to send the Chastisement to the world. This is how she used to pray, "Give me anything you want, I want to suffer, but not the world because many are innocent."

Q. Do you feel that things still have to get worse before the Warning?

A. I think so, yes. What do you think of that? The truth is that things are not too good, right? Here, we have been lucky—we have very good priests.

Q. Do you feel that the people of the village have become more devout since the apparitions?

A. At the beginning we were all affected very much, but afterwards, no. I don't think we're as good as we used to be.

Q. If you could personally speak to the world, what would you say?

A. What could I tell you. What I ask for in my poor prayers is that there be more fear of God. It seems to me that there is not enough fear of God. When we turn on the television set, my daughter gets angry with me because I cry very much and I say, "My Lord, when death comes naturally it affects one so much—but we say he died after going to confession, or

he had a marvelous faith, but those who get killed in the streets make me cry very much." My daughter says, "I am turning off the TV. You are not going to look at that any more." And I answer her, "I do not want to see it. My tears, oh Lord, must surely help because I cry with all my heart." I ask God that it end, that this terrible thing of killing in the streets, as if men were animals, come to an end. □

* On a night in June, 1962, three of the seers were heard screaming in terror. As they descended from the pines, sorrowfully they cried, "Oh, let the little children die before it happens! Let the people have time to go to confession beforehand!" The girls had seen visions of horror depicting the terrible punishment to come "if the world does not change its ways."—*Star on the Mountain*, p. 42.

** A short while after this interview was conducted, Julia did actually go to visit Mari Loli in Massachusetts where the visionary lives with her husband and family.

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