

GARABANDAL



THE MESSAGE OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL • JULY-SEPTEMBER 1998

FATHER LUIS ANDREU, S.J.
THE FIFTH VISIONARY
OF GARABANDAL

The Fifth Visionary of Garabandal

By Teresa Tseu



There were not only four visionaries at Garabandal but five and significantly enough, this fifth one was a priest, Jesuit Father Luis Maria Andreu Rodamilans. And he not only saw Our Lady but also something that not even the four girls were privileged to see, a preview of the great Miracle prophesied to take place at Garabandal.

ON AUGUST 8, 1961, FATHER LUIS Andreu went up to Garabandal with a group of friends. It was his second visit to the village. That evening the visionaries went off on an ecstatic march, the first of many such marches during the course of the apparitions. It was a rather long march that ended at the pines and Father Luis was in the crowd that followed the girls. Later, Conchita recorded the event in her Diary:

It was dark when the Blessed Virgin appeared to us. At the end of the rosary, the four of us went into ecstasy and we began to walk toward the pines. When we arrived at the pines, Father Luis Maria, who had followed us, said, "Miracle, miracle" and he kept staring upward. We could see him. Now, in our ecstasies we never see anyone (except the Blessed Virgin). But we saw Father Luis, and the Blessed Virgin told us that he was seeing her and the Miracle, too.

In the ecstasy, the children saw him on his knees. Conchita further stated that the Virgin, who was looking at Father Luis, seemed to say to him, "You will soon be with me."

Father Luis left Garabandal by car that same night with his friends. Stopping at Cosio, he met the parish priest, Father Valentin Marichalar and

said to him, "Don Valentin, what the children are saying is true, but I ask you not to repeat what I have just told you for the Church can never be prudent enough in this kind of affair." The pastor jotted down these memorable words in a notebook that very night.

Continuing his journey with Rafael Fontaneda and his family, Father Luis showed overwhelming joy the entire trip, repeating, "I am so happy. 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."

As the car passed through Reinosa, Father Luis, who was sitting in the front on the passenger side, repeated these words once again. Then he raised his head slightly and fell silent. His friend Fontaneda sitting in the back seat asked him, "Father, are you all right?" "Yes, I am just sleepy," came the reply. Then he lowered his head to his chest, made a slight

coughing sound—and died. He experienced no pain, no death agony, but passed from this life to the next with a smile on his lips.

Needless to say, Father Luis' death was a devastating blow to his family and caused quite a stir among those associated with Garabandal, but one would have thought that his death would have ended his involvement in the events. This was not to be the case. In the days that followed, the girls actually spoke with him. Conchita relates in her Diary entry for August 16, 1961:

...at eight or nine o'clock in the evening, the Blessed Virgin said to the four of us, 'Father Luis will now come and speak with you'. A moment later he came and called us one by one. We didn't see him at all but only heard his voice. It was exactly like the one he had on earth. When he had spoken for a while, giving us advice, he told us certain things for his brother, Father Ramon Maria Andreu. He taught us some words in French, German and English, and also taught us to pray in Greek.

Father Luis did one other thing. His sudden death had come as a great shock to his mother for he had been in excellent health. On the day he died, she was packed and waiting for

his return from Garabandal because together they were going to Germany. But instead of seeing her son with his usual big smile, she received a death notice. Therefore, to console her, Father Luis sent, through the girls, this beautiful message: *"Be happy and content, for I am in heaven and see you every day."*

A short time afterwards this good mother realized her long-time ambition and entered a Visitation Convent in the city of San Sebastian.

But there is still more concerning Father Luis and Garabandal. Three years after his burial in the Jesuit cemetery at Oña, Spain, the Blessed Virgin told Conchita during a locution (a voice without any accompanying vision) on July 14, 1964, that on the day after the great Miracle, the body of Father Luis will be removed from the grave and found incorrupt, just as it was on the day he was buried.

A Good Tree Bears Good Fruit

Father Luis Andreu was born of a religious family on July 3, 1923, at Bilbao, Spain. Of his five brothers, three became Jesuit missionaries: Alejandro in South America, Ramon in California and Marcelino in China (he is currently in Taiwan). On July 18, 1965, during a Mass celebrated at Garabandal by Father Marcelino, Conchita had a locution in which the

Virgin said that Father Marcelino Andreu of China and Father Alejandro of South America will both see the great Miracle.

Like his brothers, Father Luis had volunteered for the missions and was headed for China with Marcelino. A Jesuit friend seeing that the mother was about to be separated from all four of her priest sons, spoke to the Jesuit Superior. It was therefore provided that Father Luis would remain in continental Europe so as not to deprive this good woman the consolation of having at least one of them within a reasonable distance. One cannot help but see the hand of Divine Providence at work here arranging for Father Luis to remain in Spain to ultimately become an integral part of the Garabandal event.

A Saintly Priest

Father Marcelino recalls a memorable incident that took place on the day of Father Luis' first vows in 1944. He and Luis were walking with their mother on the grounds around the house of Loyola when they came to a small window behind the Chapel of the Conversion of St. Ignatius. From this window they could see the altar and the Blessed Sacrament. The mother took this opportunity to tell them once more of her love and her heart's desire for them. She told them that they should promise very sin-

cerely to Our Lord before the Blessed Sacrament to dedicate their lives to becoming real saints. Father Luis put his hand over his heart and closed his eyes for a moment as in deep prayer. Father Marcelino, while watching him, was sure he was again making the promise his mother had asked; the dedication of his entire life toward perfect holiness and sanctity. Father Luis' seventeen years of devoted service in the Society of Jesus is a testimony to the fulfillment of the promise he made on that day.

When Father Marcelino made his first vows in 1946 and was going to the Junioret for studies, Father Luis asked permission to stay with him for a few days at Altuna so he could personally initiate his younger brother into a life of perfect dedication. There are two things Father Marcelino vividly remembers that Father Luis stressed in a very special way at that time. One was that although high achievement in studies was important, to be excellent in the practice of virtue and striving for sanctity was more important. The other thing stressed by Father Luis was how to say the rosary and how to say it well. He explained all fifteen mysteries with special emphasis on the Visitation which Father Luis said was Our Lady's perfect example of charity and that we should live our lives for others as she did.



A PRIESTLY FAMILY: With their mother are from left, Fathers Alejandro, Ramon and Luis. Above, Marcelino.



An artist's depiction of the scene at the pines on August 8, 1961, when Father Luis Andreu was seeing a vision of the future Miracle of Garabandal.

His Last Letter

From the contents of Father Luis' last letter to Father Marcelino we can get some insight into his personality and the preparation, through suffering, that God was making for his departure from this earth. Father Marcelino recounts: "In it [the letter] he speaks of his sufferings of the past year and said he had never suffered so much. Everything seemed to go just the opposite of what he would have hoped. Yet, those who were close to him during his last year on earth did not detect any of his inner sufferings for outwardly Father Luis was always happy, pleasant to deal with, always ready to help and always joking. He even joked on his way to Garabandal the first time. He said to those who were with him, 'Let's eat good and plenty for St. Ignatius said if our mind and body are weak, we will be easily deceived by the devil'. But once he got up to Garabandal and saw the girls in ecstasy, he realized this was not just 'child's play' as some were saying, but something very serious and deserving of much attention."

He Is in Heaven

Father Luis was exceptionally intelligent and was sent to study in Innsbruck, Rome, Geneva and Paris. In addition to his native Spanish he spoke German, French, Italian, Latin, Greek and English.

On July 30, 1955, at Oña, Spain, he was ordained a priest by Archbishop Federico Melendro of Anking, China. He celebrated his first Mass on the feast of St. Ignatius of Loyola at the Chapel of Loyola. One can imagine the joy that filled his angelic heart!

A little later, after he received his Doctorate in theology, Father Luis joined the Jesuit faculty in Oña and became professor of theology. This is the position he held when he heard about the apparitions which were taking place at Garabandal. Because of his great love for the Blessed Virgin, he decided to go to the village and investigate. He

went to Garabandal for the first time on July 29, 1961, and observed the raptures of the four girls, taking notes of everything he saw and heard. He was deeply impressed.

A week later he wished to go again to Garabandal to study more. He did so on that memorable August 8, never realizing that he himself would become the object of much study due to the special favors Our Lady had prepared for him on that fateful day. □

Sr. Maria Luisa (mother of the Andreu brothers) at her convent in San Sebastian where she lived to be over 90.



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