



THE APPEALS
OF OUR LADY
APPARITIONS
AND
MARIAN SHRINES
IN THE WORLD

Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in LA CODOSERA

SPAIN, 1945

In May of 1945, right after World War II ended, the Sorrowful Virgin appeared near La Codosera to two visionaries, in the same spot near Chandavilla and in the same days, but at different moments. One of the two seers even carried the stigmata, signs of the Passion of Jesus Christ. The Virgin asked in both cases for the construction of a Shrine. The apparitions of Chandavilla officially began in 1945, but seventy-five years earlier, another had already existed... In that period, in June of 1870, a little girl said she had seen the Virgin in "Vallesco." The people of the village went to the apparition site, very close to the spot where today appears the Shrine of Chandavilla, and the pastor of the time, Don Agustín Rubio Mero, native of the village, celebrated an outdoor Mass on the site of the presumed apparition. La Codosera is a district of the province of Badajoz, in Estremadura, situated northwest of Badajoz, at the border with Portugal. On the 27th of May in 1945, around three o'clock in the afternoon, the little Marcelina Barros Expósito and her cousin Agustina González (both from La Codosera) were on their way to the nearby hamlet of "El Marvó" to carry out an errand for the mother of Marcelina. After having covered about three kilometers, while passing through the area called Chandavilla, Marcelina noticed a dark swelling that was protruding from a chestnut tree, at a distance of about seventy meters to the right of the footpath. At the moment, she did not pay any attention to it, but on her way back she wondered if she would have still seen that strange object. The object was still there. As if gently urged by an interior force, she approached to see it better. She remained extremely surprised in seeing clearly the image of the Most Holy Sorrowful Virgin, enveloped in luminous rays, as high as halfway up the trunk of the chestnut tree, by profile, with a halo of brilliant stars, a black mantle embroidered with stars, hands joined, and a most beautiful face in which was reflected a sadness both human and divine. As soon as the vision disappeared, the girl instinctively began running toward the village together with her cousin who, however, had seen nothing. Having arrived at home, she sought to maintain silence, but she could not and so she recounted to her mother what had happened to her; naturally, word spread very rapidly throughout the neighborhood. The event that had created great expectations in the citizenry of the village, repeated itself again.

In the morning of the 4th of June, nine days after the first apparition, the Most Holy Virgin appeared again to the young Marcelina near Chandavilla and told her to return that evening to perform a sacrifice in the presence of all those who would have come with her. The young girl obeyed and that evening, in the presence of a thousand people, both Portuguese and Spanish, she fell into ecstasy, stirring up a great uproar. The girl was about seventy meters from the chestnut tree when, suddenly, in the blue of the sky, Our Lady of Sorrows appeared to her, slowly descending until she remained in front of the tree, in the same position in which she had seen her the first time. The Virgin invited the girl to travel, on her knees, the distance that separated them. The girl was not convinced, and so the Sorrowful Mother encouraged her by saying: "Be not afraid. Nothing will happen to you. I will arrange in front of you a carpet of branches and grasses so that you will not get hurt." Departing from across the creek, the girl began to move on her knees between two threads that were unraveling through the spectators. Her mother, Augustina, who was present at the scene, fainted. For about ten minutes she remained kneeling near the tree. Then the chestnut opened slightly and within it appeared a beautiful church, adorned with precious lamps. On the altar, the Virgin Mary appeared, indicating to the girl to dip her fingers into the holy water font and make the Sign of the Cross, a gesture that was repeated by all those present. After the apparition, the Virgin descended from the altar piece and asked her if she desired to go away with her. The young girl replied: "Yes, Lady, now" and the Most Holy Virgin smiled, embraced her and kissed her forehead. The girl felt on her face the caress of the mantle of the Mother of God. The Virgin expressed the desire that in that place would be built a chapel in her honor. Upon coming out of the ecstasy, Marcelina went back to speak with her friends. On the knees of Marcelina there were no marks or scratches, in spite of having traveled seventy meters on her knees; many young people (and the same pastor of La Codosera, Juan Antonio Galán y Galán) attempted to do it, but were forced to give up because of the cuts and wounds. Marcelina encountered the Virgin other times, on several occasions in the company of other people, among whom was her teacher, Josefina Martín. She studied in a convent of nuns in Villafraña de Los Barros (Badajoz) and afterward she entered as a religious into the Congregation of the Sisters of the Company of the Cross, the 2nd of August 1975, in Seville, where she dedicated herself to the care of

the sick, of orphans, of the poor, and of the elderly, with the name of Sister Mary of the Mercy of the Cross. Today she is in a cloistered convent in Ciudad Real.

Afra Brigido Blanco, born on the 21st of January 1928, at the age of seventeen years, on the 30th of May (Feast of Corpus Domini), at three o'clock in the afternoon (the same hour of the apparitions to Marcelina), she decided to go with her friends to Chandavilla. Upon arrival she thought she could see, amongst several dark clouds, something that resembled a chapel and, more clearly, the precise form of a cross. The following day, at the same time, in the same place many people were already gathered. She sat down in front of the chestnut tree of the apparitions and saw emerge from the dark clouds a dark figure that, little by little got closer to her, allowing a glimpse of the profile of the image of the Sorrowful Virgin, with her face turned to the right. Very emotionally touched by this vision, Afra fainted, and upon regaining consciousness, she decided to return home with her friends. A few days later, her paternal grandmother passed away. She dressed in mourning and left the house very little. In the face of insistence from her friends, however, she let herself be convinced to return to Chandavilla, upon permission from her mother, the lady Cipriana. It was the 17th of June when, sitting on one of the chestnut trees in front, she again saw the apparition, in the identical form as the previous time. She entered into ecstasy and began to travel the bed of the creek on her knees. The Virgin ordered her to get up and to continue walking up to the chestnut. Arrived there, she knelt down and began a conversation with the Virgin. The Virgin told her that she would always be near her, told her a secret, predicted great sufferings, and at the end told her to give a kiss on her behalf to little Marcelina (who was present) and to make the Sign of the Cross, which the young girl did in that very instant. During successive apparitions, the Virgin asked her to recite the Holy Rosary and to have a hermitage built on the site of the apparition, in addition to a sacrifice, that of singing in the solemn Mass of the 4th of September, wish that was realized thanks to the spontaneous suggestion of the pastor of La Codosera, Afra and other friends, among which Marcelina, remained in Villar del Rey from the Sunday the 21st of July, to the 24th, vigil of Saint James, and that same Sunday they visited the cloister of Our Lady of the Incarnation of Rivera, patroness of the region, and they returned every day, morning and evening, to give thanks for the favor received. During one of these visits (Monday, the 22nd), while the Via Crucis was being conducted, Afra entered into ecstasy during the Eleventh Station of the Cross, situated to the side of the epistolary, almost at the center of the cloister, and she saw the Calvary of Our Lord Jesus Christ and His crucifixion, and she felt profound pain in the palms of her hands. After this event, first appeared on her hands some lesions, with an incision in the center in the shape of a nail, and then another wound in her ribcage that lost blood, causing her great suffering, and finally lesions on her feet. With the passing of time, the wounds of the feet and hands became larger until they went all the way through her limbs, from front to back, with the appearance of a deep incision on her back. The blood gushed forth principally on Fridays. Afra was subjected to medical examinations and to specialized treatments from a hospital attendant, but the wounds did not heal. It is interesting to underscore that the wounds emanated a pleasant scent. Afra lived and worked in a hospital in Madrid, dedicating herself to works of charity, until she died, on the 25th of August 2006, at the age of 80 years old, after a long and agonizing malady.

For La Codosera, these occurrences were exceptional and extraordinary. And not only for the conversion of the souls that followed, but also because they gave origin to the construction of a little chapel that covers and encloses within a fenced area the chestnut tree where the apparitions of the Virgin took place and a larger church, in which is distinctly displayed a statue of Our Lady of Sorrows, corresponding to the description given by the visionaries, and brought to life by a very devout Marian artist, Fr. Genaro Lázaro Gumiel, who presented it as a gift to the Shrine (the construction of which began on the 27th of May 1947).

Despite all this, the diocesan curia of Badajoz has not yet officially declared anything on these matters, but has however given permission for the construction of the Shrine. Each year, on the 27th of May, a festive religious pilgrimage occurs to which many people participate, coming from the entire region and from nearby Portugal.



The Blessed Mother as she appeared to La Codosera. The visionary Afra Brigido Blanco who lived the Passion of Jesus. Shrine in memory of the statue of Our Lady of Sorrows as she appeared in the visionaries. People making its procession to La Codosera. The cross of the apparitions to Afra.