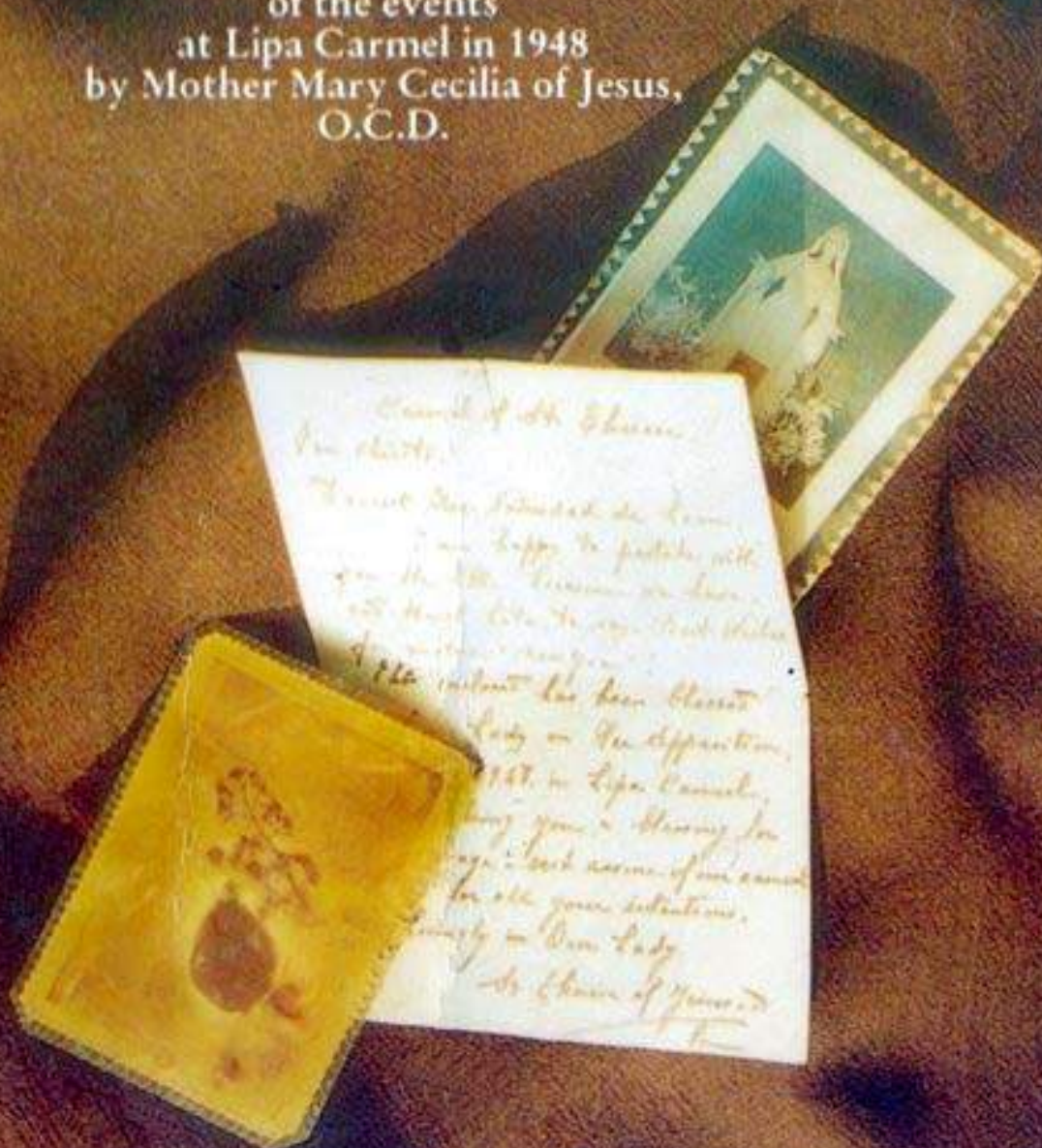


Lipa

June Keithley

with the original account
of the events
at Lipa Carmel in 1948
by Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus,
O.C.D.



LIPA

*with the original account
of the events
at Lipa Carmel
in 1948*

*by
Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D.*

£

June Keithley

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**TO MARY,
MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACE**

*With gratitude
to all who have participated
in forwarding her cause*

Message

The Second Plenary Council of the Philippines adopted as its battle cry:

“We must make the Catholic Church in the Philippines a church of the people, a church of the poor!”

The delegates to the Council said, loud and clear: “Lay people should take a leading role in the decision-making of the Catholic Church, and a leading role in the implementation of those decisions!”

Especially, the Council stressed the role of the Catholic woman. “She should not only arrange the altar, with flowers. She should not only serve merienda to the altar boys. She should not only sew vestments for the priest, and launder the altar linens. She should take an active part in the decision-making of the Catholic Church, and in the implementation of those decisions.”

June Keithley Castro has responded to these aspirations of the Second Plenary Council in an extraordinary way.

Years ago, the Catholic Hierarchy of the Philippines investigated the strange events that occurred at Lipa, and came to the official conclusion that there was in them no evidence of the supernatural.

June Keithley Castro — a housewife, a mother, an actress, a singer, a television producer, and above all a woman — feels that there was evidence of the supernatural in the things that happened at Lipa.

She told the story on television, in a simple, human, vivid, interesting way. She has put the story into permanent form, with this book. She is asking the Catholic Church to re-consider the decision that was made many years ago.

Her television show won many awards, and it drew the attention of the leaders of the Catholic Church, both in the Philippines, and in Rome. She has always been very reverent, very respectful, very lady-like.

But she has also been very strong.

She is doing, in her own way, with the unique talents that God has given her, exactly what the Second Plenary Council wanted women to do.

The TV show was unexpected . . . The book was unexpected . . . But leaders of the Catholic Church watched the television production with great interest, and they will study the book carefully, and with real concern.

“Lipa” is the first sign of the Church in the Philippines becoming a church of the people . . . June Keithley Castro — with her patience and perseverance and indomitable courage — is the beginning of a new era.

James B. Reuter, S.J.
Director, National Office of Mass Media

Preface

When I made up my mind to produce a series on "The Woman Clothed with the Sun" for Philippine television, I decided to include an episode that would focus on a local apparition. My documentary on Medugorje had proven that a sizeable segment of Filipino viewers were interested in Marian Apparitions, and it would stand to reason that they would be curious about local happenings. Not one of our reported apparitions merited the local hierarchy's approval, but that didn't bother me as I had no intention of proving or disproving the veracity of such events. It was to be a mere exposition—or so, I thought.

However, anyone who has worked for or with Mary, soon comes to a consciousness that there really are no such things as coincidences in the so-called "Plan of Salvation", and, so it was with "LIPA".

The public's attention had been caught a little over a generation ago by this supposed apparition of the Virgin; however, all I knew of it was what I had heard as a child. My mother and her friends were always taking about "the war", but I vaguely remember a conversation on how during the "peace time", the Virgin Mary was thought to have appeared in the Philippines, and they suspected that it was some nun throwing rose petals off the roof of a convent.

Bored though I was with grown-up talk, I was intrigued by this and would think about it from time to time. In my mind's eye, I had an image of a shadowy figure peeking out from behind a turret or castle-like ramparts, furtively scattering petals in the air.

Little did I know, as the cliché goes, that truth is stranger than fiction, that I would one day be used to bring the figures out of the shadows of the past forty years, or that the fragrance of the petals of Lipa would fill my life.

I began my research on Lipa in 1989. I had no idea where to begin, and I didn't want too many people to know of my interest in it as I didn't want to have to deal with all the negative reaction it would elicit. My journey with Mary had started the year before, and though I was slowly coming to the realization that everything was being orchestrated somehow—for there were too many “coincidences”—I still hadn't reached the understanding of “God's own time”.

As “Mary's luck” would have it, I attended a Medugorje reunion, and when the lady beside me learned that I was planning a series on Marian apparitions, she asked if I had ever heard of Lipa, and if I would be interested in knowing more about it. She brought me to the Carmelite nuns of Lipa, and soon, Nelly Lopez and I became friends. She not only introduced me to the remaining witnesses and protagonists of Lipa, but together with Carmen Kalaw was instrumental in setting up a group of devotees who gathered together every Saturday to pray that the truth of the events would be revealed.

The interviews and research were done over a two-year period beginning July 1989. No one would talk at first. The nuns were afraid, and the few who would let an occasional sentence or phrase slip by would choke back their tears, hastily make shushing noises, purse and put a finger to their lips in a gesture of “silence”. There would only be a few hushed references to the “Mediatix”—the title with which the apparition was supposed

to have identified herself by. In order to draw them out, I had to pretend I knew the whole story, and then would slowly try to make heads or tails of what had happened.

But Mary's time had come, and her pace was faster than mine. I left at the end of August with my crew to conduct interviews and video-tape some of the European sites of Marian apparitions. I returned to the Philippines in October and discovered to my surprise that there would be a public penitential procession in honor of Mary Mediatrix of All Grace, and arrived at Carmel to hear the entire story of "Lipa" being narrated for the first time in more than forty years over the loudspeakers on the convent grounds. As I walked to the sacristy, the tears began to flow, for it was then I realized that someone else was in charge. And from that time on, "Lipa" had a life of its own.

It has been an agonizing and painstaking process, and Stella, Didi, Mando and I—the Madonna's little rag-tag production crew—would find ourselves travelling back and forth to Lipa to interview, check out files at the Chancery, video-tape and try to tie up the loose ends of an ever-expanding puzzle. And as we labored, little by little, witnesses would open up. We would be sent "leads", and off we would dash to check out some hitherto unknown piece of information, until we came out with the final product and a picture which no one had ever seen in its totality before.

It wasn't easy, and many nights I would sit and agonize and wonder if what we were doing was right—for the picture slowly being uncovered was perhaps what some members of the Church would prefer to have left hidden.

And there were reputations to consider. So many of the protagonists and antagonists had passed away. Who would speak in their defense? Was it morally right to continue this exposé when those who had silenced others had themselves been silenced by the grave? And what about the Church that we had come to love so much? Would we be tearing it down instead of shoring it up?

I found myself doing what I never thought to do: withholding and editing out certain information for the sake of prudence. In order to lighten the burden, we would joke about how we would all soon be excommunicated and kid about using aliases.

Assailed by doubts, disheartened and disillusioned at times by the weaknesses of men, I only knew that the story had to be told and the facts allowed to speak for themselves. I didn't know if we could ever prove that the Madonna had come to her children in the Philippines, but I had hoped that reputations could be restored and the healing begin. And, that when others would learn of the simplicity, humility, obedience, and grace under pressure of those who had suffered because they believed that their Heavenly Mother had come to shower her love, then perhaps, they too would see in them, as I had done, the reflection of Jesus. This was what made up the Body of Christ. These then were for me the real petals of Lipa. Would that we too, could have the strength to make such a bouquet of our lives. Hail Mary, full of Grace, the Lord is indeed with Thee.

*June Keithley
January 1992*

The wickedness of men would destroy my plan if possible, but my power given to me by God Himself is infinitely greater than all the wickedness in the world. Good always triumphs over evil. Remember this always. It will give you great heart to know and reflect upon this. Satan and his legions cannot prevent my Triumph as hard as they may try, because God Himself has preordained that this should occur in this time. You are fortunate to be living in this time, this era of mercy and love. Not all have been given so great a chance to repent from so much evil.

You will know by the sign in the heavens which is I myself that the time is at hand for the instantaneous conversion of the multitude. This I will accomplish through a tremendous outpouring of grace upon the earth given at the hands of God to me for this purpose. This will be the Triumph of my Immaculate Heart of which I spoke at Fatima.

—1987 Message
to the recipient of inner locutions
on the Apostolate of Holy Motherhood

My message here is the same as at Fatima.

—Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace
LIPA, 1948

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Introduction

The text contained in this book is adapted from the fifth and sixth episodes of the television documentary series, *The Woman Clothed with the Sun*. These episodes signal the beginning of The Keithley Report's inquiry into some of the recent reported apparitions of the Virgin Mary—by "recent" is meant the period just before the Second World War all the way to the present.

The last apparitions to be officially approved by the Church were those that occurred in Belgium in 1933 in the areas of Beauraing and Banneux. And these barely made it, so to speak. So would begin a period spanning the years from the late 1930s to the early 1960s when the church would react to reports of apparitions with an ominous silence and, at times, some form of disapproval—this, despite the enthusiasm and clamor for recognition from the public that believed in them. It would not always be the case, for in the last twenty years, an attitude of tolerance, if not a cautious yet growing openness has begun to develop.

Much is only now coming to light. While the messages and intent of the Lady of the apparitions show a continuing pattern and consistency, strangely enough, some of the apparitions seem to be connected as they center on specific revelations about the role of Mary in the church and in the plan of salvation.

The fifth and sixth episodes of *The Woman Clothed with the Sun* focus on one such apparition that caught the attention of Catholics the world over.

This one apparition will be of special interest to the Filipinos, for the mysterious events that occurred in 1948 within the cloisters of a Carmelite convent in the city of Lipa brought notice to the Philippines, and had thousands streaming from all over the country to the convent grounds. And marvelous stories spread of a lovely lady in white, of petals falling from the sky, of a spinning sun, a moving statue, miraculous cures and conversions.

It is fortunate that a number of witnesses are still alive today who remember what happened and, indeed, what they saw. Following are excerpts from their testimony:

There was a commotion in the alleyway and we noticed something flying.

— VICENTE A. MAYO
GOVERNOR OF BATANGAS PROVINCE

So I shouted, 'Shower! Shower!' And when it's like that, we all run.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

Nagkakagulo ang tao kasi ang sabi nila ay mabango, talagang mabango.

[There was a commotion because people said they smelled an intense fragrance.]

— BELEN MAYO

A hundred or so petals, but they were fluttering down.

— RETIRED GENERAL GODOFREDO M. JULIANO
PHILIPPINE AIR FORCE, FERNANDO AIR BASE

It was on the floor and when I entered, it was covered with cardboard. When I opened it, there were petals.

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

Noong makapanlaglag na ganyan, damputan kami.

[When they fell, we grabbed at them.]

— ARMANDO MENDOZA JR.
BARANGGAY CAPTAIN OF GRANJA, LIPA

There was this hole in the child's head and then it magically, suddenly, miraculously disappeared.

— FELIX BAUTISTA JR.
FORMER PRESS UNDERSECRETARY
UNDER THE AQUINO ADMINISTRATION

Ang pangyayari ho, talagang ako'y kinilabutan.

[What transpired really made my hair stand.]

— GUILLERMO MILAN

But just as suddenly as the events began, so too were they put to an end, for the Philippine Catholic Church declared in 1951 that the apparitions had no supernatural origin. In the long, stunned silence that followed this pronouncement, myth and much detraction have grown thick around the events of 1948.

We are fortunate in that we have, after all these years, access to some of the nuns at Carmel who were witnesses, and the visionary herself. In the retelling of the story, her memory fails her at times, especially with regard to specific dates and details. But then, more than 40 years have passed since the apparitions, and she has confessed that she tried to block from memory all of these events, for the resulting investigation and verdict caused her great pain.

An essential role was also played by Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, the prioress of Lipa Carmel from 1946 to 1950, but this very valuable witness passed away in 1982.

We also lament the passing away of other important witnesses, most specifically, Monsignor Alfredo Verzosa, Bishop of Lipa, and Monsignor Alfredo Obviar, Auxiliary Bishop and Chaplain of Carmel. Both believed in the authenticity of the apparitions but were never questioned by the investigative committee, and after the church verdict, maintained an official silence.

After the pronouncement in 1951, the documents and materials in Carmel's possession were ordered destroyed. These included the very valuable diaries of those involved. And nothing can be found in the archives of the Arzobispados of Lipa and Manila, or in the nunciature. However, three or four documents have unexpectedly surfaced, including an account written by Mother Cecilia during the time of the apparitions.*

As we attempted to reconstruct the story, we were hampered by what was known in times prior to Vatican II as the "spirit of death" which governed life in monastic orders, a spirit of radical interior mortification done in the interest of spiritual growth that, among other things, discouraged religious from questioning their superiors and seeking to know more than they were told. In the course of our interviews with the nuns, we were often met with replies

*This account was originally written in English, translated into Spanish for Bishop Verzosa, then translated back to English from the Spanish version. The Keithley Report utilized this last English version for the documentary. After the documentary had been aired, the original English document surfaced, the complete text of which can be found in Appendix A.

such as “I don’t know,” “We weren’t told,” or “We were not supposed to know anything,” thus making verification on precise dates and details somewhat difficult.

It has taken some time to piece the entire story together, as there is no one complete account of all the events. Various people contributed different parts of what emerged as a very complex narrative.

The Keithley Report tries at a sober presentation of the facts—as far as can be reconstructed. There are numerous petitions to have the case of Lipa reopened for investigation, and perhaps, should this take place, this report may be of some help.

We have tried to get some answers: What actually happened? What led to the Church’s unfavorable pronouncement? Could there possibly be enough basis for reinvestigation?

CHAPTER ONE

The Apparitions of Lipa: A Prelude

The story of Lipa might be described as the stuff Filipino movies are made of. The narrative is a series of incredible events, punctuated by highly theatrical scenes, an intense drama unfolding within the hushed cloisters of a Carmelite convent. It has been said that the Blessed Virgin Mary manifests herself in a way that she will best be received. She takes on the character of each particular culture—thus, her different costumes, languages, and styles of delivering her message. And so we have Lipa—a story so well suited to the Filipino's love for melodrama, for whimsical turns of plot, a story so anchored on the structure of values and relationships that make up Filipino society, a story of wonders and miracles—entirely consistent with a people known for their ready innocence, openness and predisposition to the supernatural.

A Short Note on the History of Lipa¹

Just an hour's drive south from Metro Manila is the city of Lipa. Once the centerpiece of the southern Tagalog province of Batangas, it now only seems to be a shadow of its former self.

In the early days of Philippine history, it was synonymous with old world culture and glamour, its social structure dominated by the landed gentry—their fabled wealth and prosperity attributed to coffee plantations, for in the 1800s, Lipa was the world's sole supplier of coffee beans. So abundant was the harvest that the ladies of the aristocracy were said to wear *sapatillas*, or slippers encrusted with diamonds. But even when a virus destroyed vast acres of the crop and put a sudden end to the years of opulence, the Lipeño wasn't cowed, and bounced back some years later with his profitable citrus trees.

However, the hardy Batangueño with his *joie de vivre* was no match for the ravages of World War II. Lipa soon earned for itself another distinction: that of one of the most devastated cities in the Far East.

The Japanese had invaded it and established a district headquarters where supplies were stocked and prisoners held. Those who could fled to Manila or to the countryside. Others were not as fortunate. Sixteen thousand men, women, and children were herded into a diocesan seminary that had been converted into a prison and were bayoneted to death, their bodies and building burned in a huge, ghastly holocaust. This would become the site of the Carmelite convent of Lipa, the setting of supposedly supernatural events that would capture the attention of an entire nation and of Marian devotees all over the world.

The Visionary

Teresita Castillo, or "Teresing" as she is fondly called, came from one of the more prominent families of Tanauan, Batangas, her father having once been the governor of the province. The youngest in the brood and reportedly the

clan's favorite, she led a sheltered and pampered life, nursed on convent school values, with piano lessons seeming to be the focus of her life.

But on July 4, 1948, her 21st birthday, just days before her graduation piano recital, this young lady took the most radical step of her life to fulfill a dream she had nourished since the age of ten. In the early hours of the morning, she fled her home to enter the contemplative community of the Convent of the Discalced Carmelites in Lipa.

All day long, members of her family went back and forth trying to convince her to leave. That evening, one of her brothers returned in a drunken frenzy, brandishing a gun, threatening the portress, demanding that his sister be brought out.

One of the nuns, Sister Elizabeth of the Sacred Heart, O.C.D., then the portress of the convent, remembers that crucial evening:

Sinundan ako, and then tinututukan ako dito sa aking likod. "Do you like me to shoot you?" E kako, "No, please, no please," ganyan. Hanggang sa punta kung saan-saan ako, hanggang doon sa nagtago ako doon sa sulok ng turno. Sinundan din ako, tinututukan din ako. "Do you like me to shoot you?" E siyempre natatakot ako, katawang lupa rin naman ako, takot na takot sa baril. "Do you like me to shoot you?" "No please," kako, parating "No please."

... Yon pala, behind the grill aynaka cross formsila, nagdadasal sila ng kwan, ng taimtim na nagdadasal, pinagdadasal ako.

Nagmamakaawa ako. Siyempre natatakot akong patayin ako. Nagmamakaawa ako, "Mother," e kako, "Pakiusap naman, ilabas n'yo na si Teresita!"

Ako naman, umakyat ako sa staircase. . . . Mayroong Sacred Heart doon, 'ku, hinimas ko nang hinimas na ganoon. "Sacred Heart! Maawa ka sa akin! Maawa ka sa akin!"

[He followed me, pointing a gun at my back. "Do you like me to shoot you?" I said, "No, please, no please." Wherever I went, even when I hid in the corner of the turn, he followed me pointing the gun at me. "Do you like me to shoot you?" Well, of course I was scared. I'm only human and I'm so afraid of guns. "Do you like me to shoot you?" "No please," I said. It was always, "No please."

It turned out that behind the grille, the sisters were in cross form, praying fervently. They were praying for me.

I was pleading. Of course, I was afraid I would be killed. I was pleading, "Mother, please bring Teresita out!"

I climbed the staircase. There was a statue of the Sacred Heart. I stroked it again and again. "Sacred Heart!" I said. "Have mercy on me! Have mercy on me!"

Teresing also remembers that night:

. . . And so, I said maybe it might be better if I go down and see him. So Mother Prioress said, "Yes." So I went to the parlor, you know the parlor, no? But I was inside. And here was my brother just right in front of me, and I saw the revolver, *nakaganoon doon sa square ba* [it was aimed through one of the spaces of the grille].

Sabiko, "O, bakit? [I said, "What do you want?"] Do you want to kill me, to shoot me? Well, alright," I said. "If you want, shoot me right now." I said, "Do you think that if you kill me, my body will be brought out?" I said, "No, I am here and I'll be buried here."

Her family continued to pressure her to leave and soon, oppression of another form would manifest itself.

The Adversary

On the night of July 31, 1948,² while praying in her cell, Teresing was startled by three loud knocks. As a foul odor pervaded the room, she heard a man's voice:

Teresing: I thought it was my brother again see, and, but then no, it was very different, the voice was very different from any human being. It is guttural and hoarse. I could almost not understand what he was saying. But he was telling me, I think as far as my memory is concerned, he was telling me to pity my parents, and that I have a certain obligation towards my parents.

... I was so scared, I was motionless I think, no? And I didn't know what to do because that was the first time that happened in my life, see? So I just started the rosary, and I was showing it wherever he was, I don't know, but I showed the rosary, and then he left the room.

That was the first time that I heard, see? First time in my life that I had such an experience. At that time, I was not aware of anything like this, that the devil can show himself.

JK: Did you know that, that he was the devil?

Teresing: No, not yet. But when I heard his voice, I concluded that he is a devil. ... Then when I looked at the floor, I saw footprints. The footprints also don't belong to any human being. There are no toes.

JK: No toes?

Teresing: Except only one, and then another one. A big one and then a smaller one.

After that, I went to our prioress, Mother Superior, and told her, "Can you come with me and have a look?" And so she did. And Mother Cecilia, I think *ginanoon yata* [she did this] (Teresing makes a gesture suggesting that the prioress examined the footprint with her forefinger) with her finger and it was black soot, no? So, Mother Cecilia said, "We will not remove that first."

The Mother Prioress had initially been incredulous, and had only consented to look at the footprints upon Teresing's insistence. But the next day, after Mass, she worriedly consulted Bishop Alfredo Obviar—then Auxiliary Bishop of Lipa and Chaplain of Carmel. They both examined the footprint which was later wiped away. He then hurried to inform his archbishop, Monsignor Alfredo Verzosa, who instructed that the postulant be observed and given adequate food and rest.

The voice returned several times during that month, taunting Teresing to give up her vocation, painting vivid pictures of her family suffering over her absence, questioning her obedience and love for the bishop and the prioress. Somehow her courage grew, and Teresing was able to resist him:

And so I said, "Why do you have to pester me here?" I said, "I'm already in peace!"

However, the persecution was to escalate. He soon revealed himself to her—the first two times, just a face on the wall:

It is really something very ugly. It's really ugly, no, with around an inch width of fire around the face. But one thing that I noticed, he could not look straight as I looked straight to the devil, no? *Siya hindi* [he could not]. His eyes were always towards the left which is leading to the door outside our cell.

The third time, roused from sleep by a violent rocking motion, she saw him in full, shaking her bed:

He's around 5'5" tall, and his face is similar to that on the wall. But then the one inch of fire, *hindi lang sa* head [it was not just around the head]—all around the body.

The arms, I only saw one because it kept doing like that to me, see (shakes index finger). The other hand, I don't know anymore, I was too scared already to look!

The prioress documents that the postulant would often burst into her room, weeping, bearing on her hands ugly red welts, bleeding scratch wounds, or black and blue marks traced with soot, claiming that the enemy had hit her or tried to drag her towards the open door of the cloister.

I was scared, I was really trembling, and I cried. To tell you frankly, I said "Aba, did I come here, did I enter Carmel to see all these things?" Had I known perhaps that I would be seeing things like this, I would not have the courage perhaps to go inside.

— TERESING CASTILLO

These accounts of diabolical manifestation may seem too freakish, too "far out", especially in today's pragmatic world where belief in the existence of the devil has all but ceased. Oftentimes, hell is regarded as a mere temporal condition, a creation of the human mind, or a result of oppressive social structures.

But church history and the lives of the saints are full of accounts of confrontations with satanic forces. One comes across diaries and letters of the religious documenting with such wealth of detail, actual, physical encounters with the devil—so much so that it would be easy to believe that such occurrences are almost normal in these lives.

If one goes through the letters of the famed stigmatist Padre Pio,³ for instance, one is amazed at the regularity of his nightly tussles with demonic forces, from which he often emerged bearing visible wounds and marks of the struggle.

But these diabolical encounters are not limited to just the religious. That best-seller, *The Exorcist*, written by William Peter Blatty, was supposedly based on an actual account of an exorcism.

Just recently, there was a controversy about footage aired on the ABC network in the United States of an actual exorcism of a young girl who had been possessed. The bishop who had authorized this did so in order that people would believe that the devil exists. And there was a report in media on Cardinal John O' Connor's statement that an exorcism is now performed at least once a month in New York City, the heart of his diocese.

Such accounts make us uncomfortable, as they intrude harshly upon the modern conception of what is real, forcefully awakening us to the fact that there is another realm—a hidden, spiritual world whose existence we may have chosen to ignore, but whose dynamics and upheavals operate within our midst and determine our very being and destiny.

In fact, while planning for the television documentary, we hesitated to present the entire story of Lipa, for some of the details may prove to be disturbing. However, we had no recourse but to "tell it like it is," and to relay the events as they were reported to us. Perhaps someday, more discerning minds and hearts may be able to shed light on the meaning and significance of these unusual events.

Or perhaps one simply has to accept these events at face value, accept that there is such a thing as spiritual combat, and acknowledge the reality of God and the devil.

We must in fairness warn you that the story of Lipa from hereon simply becomes more and more incredible, and that Carmel was on the brink of a most extraordinary year.

CHAPTER TWO

The Fragrance of Flowers

According to documents and testimonies, Teresing's encounter with the enemy occurred within the span of two weeks, and the adversary's anger was exposed as he failed to convince her to disobey the prioress and the Bishop.

However, soon afterwards, the novice began to experience another type of unnatural manifestation.

The Lady's First Visit

On the afternoon of August 18, 1948, Teresing was surrounded by an overpowering fragrance and upon entering, saw someone in her cell:

The first thing I noticed, I could not see the room. I could not see anything except *maliwanag na maliwanag* [it was very, very bright].

I did not see the ceiling or walls or the bed itself, but I just calculated she was in a sitting position. So I calculated that she was sitting on my bed, but *parang wala, wala akong makita* [as if there was nothing, I could not see anything] except she.

She was in white, no? And her hair seems silvery, *yung may puti-puti ng konti* [with traces of white], something like that. And very, very beautiful.

Her face, *parang hindi ko ma-explain talaga* [it's like—I cannot quite explain], no? The beauty, just the beauty alone, you will not dream to search around or something like that. *Hindi talaga* [you really would not]... *Parang ang feeling ko, parang* the way I see, *parang* very tender [I felt she was so tender]. . .

Sabi ko [I said], “Why? *Bakit?* Why is it like this? Is life in Carmel *ba talaga, ganito?* [Is life in Carmel really like this?]”

Apprehensive as she was over this new development, Teresing was certain it was not diabolical:

The devil is very, very different and it's really rather easy to see the difference. . . . There's a smell like *parang yun bang sunog*, something burned, like that. And then also, in the presence, *pag ang devil ang nandoon, ano* [when the devil is there], I see *naman* the walls and I could manage to look at him and what he is going to do next. And besides that, besides the foul odors, his voice comes as though deep, deep, deep inside. *Yung parang* [it's as if the voice comes from within a] tunnel or whatever, something like that, so deep *na may echo* [it echoes].

The Lady's first words are documented in Mother Cecilia's account:

Do not fear, my daughter. He whom you love above everyone else has sent me. I come with a message. You have had a long and fierce battle with your enemies. It has caused me much pain. But they will no longer molest you unless there be a last, strong*

*In Mother Cecilia's original account in English, which surfaced only after the documentary was aired, the sentence read as follows: “He who loves above all things has sent me.”

assault. Do not be afraid, be brave. Your enemy is jealous because you love your Mother Prioress very much. Love her much more. Wash her feet, kiss them, then drink the water. Give this message to your mother. Love her very much but tell nothing to others.

Teresing's first conversation with the Lady lasted about 25 minutes, and the Lady disappeared 5 minutes before the Angelus bell was rung at six in the evening.

A Message for the Prioress

After supper, the postulant told the prioress all that had earlier transpired and relayed the Lady's startling request. In her own words, the Prioress recounts that she was "dubious." She wasn't sure about the Lady's identity and would not allow the postulant to wash her feet, much less kiss them and drink the water afterwards. But when Teresing returned to her cell, she found the Lady waiting for her with another message and a sign for the prioress.

The next day, Mother Cecilia informed the auxiliary bishop about the new developments and sought his advice regarding the strange request. Bishop Obviar cautioned her to be prudent and suggested that she find out who the Lady was.

But at noon of the same day, Teresing hurried to the Prioress saying that the Lady had reappeared and requested that the deed take place by three o'clock that afternoon, for such acts would be for the salvation of two souls, that of the Prioress and her own.

With this message the Lady sent on Teresing's person a sign.*

When she saw it, she humbly said, "All right then." She said, "Get a basin, washbasin, get a basin and water and let us do it," she said. So, I did it. And while doing it, I was looking at her, Mother Cecilia, and she was blushing. *Talagang nahihiya siguro* [perhaps she was really embarrassed] because at that time, we were still barefooted. Not like these days *na meron nang* [where we already wear] sandals, no? At that time, we were really barefooted. But when we go out to the garden, we have our wooden shoes.

And so after that, I took the water. And naturally, from the human point of view, if you think of the sacrifice, the order that was given to me, well, it makes it lighter. But sometimes the human side, no, dominates the spiritual side. And so I felt I was going to throw up, but I prayed to Our Lady, I said, "*Naku, huwag naman ngayon* [please, not now]. Just let me eat first *para* [so that] Mother Cecilia will not be too embarrassed naman." So after eating, after our prayers, we were going to have recreation, and before I went to the recreation room, I went to the CR [comfort room], and then I threw it all out.

- TERESING CASTILLO

Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P., a Dominican with some experience in dealing with spiritual theology and mysticism, comments on this:

Well, it is repulsive to our human judgment but it was a proof of obedience on the part of our Blessed Lady. So I see nothing repulsive or nothing wrong with it.

* Mother Cecilia states in her account that she saw fresh blood around the postulant's eyes. She gives no indication why this should have convinced her to later comply with the Lady's request. We suspect that she must have received some prior message. As one studies the accounts, one finds, as we did, that Mother Cecilia was very discreet, and many times left out explanations of her own participation in the events. Had her personal diary not been ordered destroyed, perhaps more details would have been revealed.

It is interesting to note that in 1858, the Immaculate Conception had to ask Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes three times to drink from the mud and to eat weeds—a task which this future saint could accomplish only on her third attempt. This act scandalized and prompted witnesses to say that Bernadette had gone mad, an accusation that would also be hurled against Teresing.

And it is a little known fact that in Lourdes to this day, many of those who assist in the immersion of the sick and the faithful will, at the end of the day, drink from the murky waters of the baths as a sign of humility and faith.

The First Petals

On the evening of August 19, the day the prioress and postulant had complied with the Lady's request, a nun entered Teresing's cell, but when she spoke, her voice was that of the Lady:

*Your mother made a wise decision in obeying me.
Now that you have given me proof of your humility,
and your mother of her simplicity, I can now proceed.
Both of you will always remain under my mantle.*

After Mass on the following day, August 20, Teresing witnessed for the first time the phenomenon which was soon to draw thousands to Lipa.

I was in our cell and fixing our bed in the morning. Then I heard, I heard *parang yon bang* [what seemed like] flapping of the wings. I did not pay any attention. I was arranging my bed. That was after Mass. And then I looked up because I knew there was something falling, so I looked up and I saw petals.

Sabi ko, "Aba! (looks up) Wala namang butas ito." [I said, "How can this be? There are no holes in the ceiling."] and I said, "*Bakit kaya? Ano kaya?*" ["Why? What could this be?"] I was really surprised, no!

— TERESING CASTILLO

The petals formed a cross when they reached the floor, and so she called the prioress.

Then I told her the story. And then she took the petals. I don't know what happened after that.

— TERESING CASTILLO

A Final Encounter with the Adversary

Two days later, a little after midnight on the feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Teresing's last physical battle with the enemy began. She woke up and felt unseen hands trying to strip her of her clothes. She struggled, broke free, and fled to the stairway leading to the prioress' cell.

I felt that somebody grabbed my hands but I couldn't see anybody. And I said, "*Natatalo na ako!*" ["I'm losing!"] So I was holding on to the rails, trying to fight for myself, really. I wanted to go up. Fortunately, Mother Cecilia was out of her office. . . . And so she saw me, so she went to me and tried to help me, and afterwards she told me that *parang* [it was as if] somebody is also pulling me downstairs whereas Mother Cecilia was pulling me upstairs. So I thought my body would really be in halves already!

— TERESING CASTILLO

The prioress reports that at one point in the struggle, Teresing was heard to scream, "I have no eyes to see your indecencies!" She thought that she had been completely stripped of her clothing, and that made her feel utterly weak and defenseless. When the struggle ceased at the ringing of

the community bell at 4:45 A.M., Mother Cecilia discovered Teresing had become mysteriously blind.

It is significant to recall that the Lady had asked Teresing to “love the prioress much more,” for the postulant had earlier declared to the adversary that in loving Mother Cecilia, she loved her Lord Jesus Christ. In this light, the Lady’s rather perplexing request for Teresing to drink the water that had been used to wash the prioress’ feet can now be seen not only as a request for humility or obedience, but as a way to frustrate the adversary.

Compliance with the Lady’s request seemed to bear almost immediate fruit, for it should be stressed that the first petal shower occurred the very next morning—barely 14 hours afterwards.

Like a pebble thrown into a pool, could this simple act of human collaboration have set in motion a series of events—the scope of which we can only guess at—of which the petal showers were merely an external sign?

Trials

Teresing's loss of sight signified the start of her periodic bouts with physical affliction, for she had accepted the Lady's request to sacrifice for the conversion and salvation of others. She has disclosed that the Lady would often thank her and reveal the identity of the priest or nun she was asked to suffer for.

Mother Cecilia seemed to anticipate Teresing's needs with such astonishing foresight that the girl suspected that she had been in contact with the Lady.

The postulant was not aware that the events had entered another phase, for the prioress began to receive interior locutions. Mother Cecilia revealed in her account that a mysterious voice told her in advance of the blindness and suffering, and would give her specific dates and times when she had to stay by the postulant's side. The voice also told her that the girl's sight would be restored on the 7th of September. But all this she did not reveal to Teresing.

As all but the extern sisters wore black veils when they walked around, the nuns at Carmel knew nothing of what was happening to Teresing, and in the Carmelite "spirit of death," could not inquire or comment on the unusual behavior of the prioress and postulant.

Dr. Maria Dolores de Leon, a clinical psychologist and member of a church commission which investigates paranormal phenomena for the church, has taken an interest in the case, and has interviewed several witnesses. She discloses that there was one nun, Sister Alphonse of Mary, O.C.D., now deceased, who, in 1948, stole a look at the postulant's eyes:

She was the only one who came very close and could attest to the fact that there was, the eyes were really unseeing because when she lifted the veil, all she could see was white, the white of the eyes.

Dr. de Leon states that Teresing's eyes had probably rolled up:

As a matter of fact, when we put people under hypnosis and when they are in a really deep trance, this also goes up, the eyeballs go up. Sometimes, when the eyes are physically big, bigger than usual, they cannot even close the eyes all the way. So you will only see the whites peeping out, no black. So this is actually possible.

To the idea that Teresing's blindness may have been self-induced, Dr. de Leon points out that this affliction occurred two more times:

She had no reason to induce this. If there was something she didn't want to see around her, that was possible, if she had any enemies for example, or an event that she dreaded—for example, the coming of this negative force—that would have been

enough to make her close her mind or her eyes to it. However . . . this occurred after the devil had stopped coming. So there was no reason for it.

Teresing began to suffer from the thought that her blindness could result in her rejection from Carmel, whose cloister she had embraced despite opposition from her family and the oppression of diabolical forces. Ugly talk had also begun to circulate among the nuns that a lesbian relationship was developing between the prioress and the postulant.

I was not allowed to go around because I couldn't see anything. If I go to the chapel, Mother Cecilia would bring me to the chapel, would lead me.

— TERESING CASTILLO

Dr. de Leon has subjected Teresing to some tests to determine if the visionary had any abnormal sexual tendencies. She reveals:

So in the test that I gave, it did not even show that she had strong masculine tendencies or strong feminine tendencies. It was very average.

Teresing's affliction gave her the confidence to beg the Lady for just one initial of her name, a request that was answered with the letters B-V-M. On the 30th of August, the prioress was present when the postulant asked if she could kiss the Lady's foot.

Nung ma-touch ko, very soft, [When I touched it, it was very soft] *parang, para bang* I felt *parang yung* all more reverential awe, no? *Na para bang*, "Naku, Diyos ko, hindi ko yata mabahalikan ito [My God, I don't think I can kiss this]," I was telling myself. But then I kissed, but so carefully *ba na* I think I really just reached the, I kissed the nail perhaps, and it was *mabangong-mabango, ha?* [It was very fragrant.] And *parang* the impression that I had even though I was blind, *para bang*

when I did like that (referring to the act of kissing the Lady's foot) *ang, ang, malambot. Yun bang parang malambot, parang silk.* [It was very soft, like silk.] Something like that, no?

And then, I was about to kiss the other, the other foot, *pero hindi, hindi ko tinuloy* [but I did not] because I said to myself, one is really more than enough for me.

— TERESING CASTILLO

The Darkness Lifts

On September 7, Teresing regained her sight. The portress had ushered Bishop Obviar into the parlor where the prioress and postulant were waiting. Sister Elizabeth of the Sacred Heart remembers the event:

Our bishop was there and she was, her eyes were towards that place. *Ganoon, parang ganoon.* [Like that, it was like that.] And really, her, her eyes were different, *hindi katulad natin, yung* very clear, no [not like ours, which are very clear]. But there was something really different that I was sure she was really blind.

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Suddenly, I felt someone made a sign of the cross here, on both my eyes, and soon after that, I recovered my sight and I was so happy. I was jumping up and down. At least, I said, I can still *pala see*. I was really very, very happy, no, and Monsignor Obviar too was very happy and he said *na*, "You must be in peace now," he said.

And so just as when I went blind so suddenly, when I recovered my sight, it was also as sudden as that.

— TERESING CASTILLO

Only much later did Teresing learn that the prioress had been prompted by interior locutions to kiss her eyes in order to restore her sight.

If the preceding account seems bizarre, or medieval, one must remember what the trend of past apparitions has shown us: that the Virgin manifests herself in a way that she will best be received. In this case, the visionary is a religious, and therefore one should not be surprised to find the apparitions woven into the context of religious life, specifically the Carmelite spirituality—whose dynamics may be totally foreign and unintelligible to the ordinary person.

In the early 1940s, there were other accounts of those of the religious orders who were the recipients of messages and apparitions of the Virgin. Two contemplative nuns, one in the United States—Sister Mildred Mary of Ohio, and the other in Hungary—Sister Maria Natalia, both received new titles of devotion to the Blessed Virgin. Both also had mystical experiences. Sister Mildred Mary had initially been advised to be cautious lest she suffer from an over-active imagination, but in the end, the Archbishop who was her spiritual director ordered a medal to be struck and the first and second printing of the messages of “Our Lady of America.”⁴

On the other hand, Sister Maria Natalia’s apparitions dealt with the chastisement of the Church and the earth, and of the triumph of Mary, as “Victorious Queen of the World.” It is reported that these messages were particularly instrumental in convincing Church officials to designate a feast day in honor of the Queenship of Mary.⁵

What is interesting is that many of the messages she received in war-torn Hungary from 1942 to 1945 were to be re-echoed in 1948, in the little archipelago of the Philippines.

CHAPTER FOUR

Encounters at the Vine

It is apparent to those who study the events at Lipa that there are several stages of development.

The first involves Teresing alone—her alleged encounters with the devil and the Lady in her cell.

A secondary phase is introduced when the prioress claims to receive interior locutions.

Then follows what might be called the “formal” phase, where the Lady’s manifestations begin to bear semblance to other apparitions—such as at Lourdes and Fatima. It is striking that all those who have seen the Lady—such as Catherine Labouré, Alfonse Ratisbonne at Rue du Bac, France, Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes, the children at La Salette, at Fatima, Pontmain, Beauraing and Banneux—have all emphasized how overwhelmed they were by the tenderness that radiated from her as she opened her arms in welcome.

This same gesture would also enthrall the visionary of Lipa.

At around five in the afternoon of September 12, 1948, while saying the rosary in the garden, Teresing stopped in wonder in front of a vine which shook violently although there was no wind. Suddenly, she heard her Lady's voice telling her not to fear, to kiss the earth, to obey everything she was told, and to return to the spot for 15 consecutive days, rain or shine.

The next day, with the prioress' permission, she returned to the garden and after a few minutes in prayer, saw the vine move. The Lady appeared on a cloud, dressed in white, hands clasped over her breast and a golden rosary hanging from her right hand.

Teresing was so struck by her majesty that she tried once more to elicit an explicit response from the Lady as to her identity. And so she asked:

"Beautiful Lady," I said, "Who are you?"

She just answered me, "*I am your mother, and I am the mother of my Son, Jesus.*"

In this apparition and in the others to follow, Mary's messages would continue to focus on priests and nuns, and she would stress the necessity of prayer and penance for them. She explained that for many, pride was the obstacle that barred them from returning to the true fold, and that shame had hardened some hearts.

Pray for them as you have never prayed before. The Sacred Heart of my Son bleeds anew for every fallen priest or nun.

This concern for the religious has surfaced as a dominant theme of many apparitions in many parts of the world. The third part of the secret of Fatima is supposed to focus on this. So too have subsequent apparitions such as those of Garabandal, Medugorje, Akita, Naju , etc. *

On September 14, Teresing found Mary waiting, her arms outstretched:

She looks at you like a mother, like a mother whose love is beyond, I don't know, I cannot explain, *yung parang* [it's as if] every time she looks at me and every time I see her, she would like to embrace you, to make you feel that you are loved, to make you feel that she's always there to help each one of us, not only I but each one of us. And it makes us also feel the need to pray more, to spend more on prayer.

— TERESING CÁSTILLO

The Virgin then asked that the place be blessed the following day in the presence of the community, a request Teresing promptly relayed to the prioress, who received confirmation of this from another interior locution. So the necessary arrangements were made.

The Blessing at the Vine

The blessing took place at 3:20 the next afternoon, the 15th of September, with Bishop Obviar presiding and the community of Carmel in attendance. During the proceeding, Mary appeared to Teresing, arms again extended as if to embrace everyone present. This was the first time members of the community would see the visionary in ecstasy.

*In fact, in the course of our interview with her, Teresing commented that prior to the apparitions, she had, in her naiveté, believed all priests and nuns to be holy. Thus, the Lady's message regarding the clergy and the religious had come as a mild shock to her.

Yung talagang sa ayos niya, kita mo na may kausap sa vine doon sa itaas [You could tell she was talking with someone on the vine]. . . . During the ecstasy, *ibang-iba ang mukha* [her face was very different]. Very heavenly *ang face niya* [it was very heavenly].

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

She was there in front of the community, in front of the altar and I saw her kneeling there looking only to one, one position like that. Her eyes were really focused on one place, looking like that.

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Teresing relates that the Lady had told her to kiss the ground and eat the grass, a request similar to that made to Bernadette at Lourdes.

She bent her head until the ground and I don't know if she kissed or what.

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Siguro sinabi sa kanya ng Blessed Virgin kumuha ng lupa at kumain. Kumain naman siya pagkatapos nakitang nilunok niyang ganoon, nilawit ang dila, di wala na, nakain na niya. Tapos yung grass, kumuha din siya, kinain niya.

[The Virgin probably told her to get some earth and eat it. She ate it then swallowed. She put out her tongue—the soil was gone, she had already eaten it. Then she got some grass and ate it.]

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

I don't know how it tastes because when I am there, my attention is not on what I am doing but on the person who is, who was actually speaking to me.

... Perhaps she is testing my obedience first of all and second, perhaps, she is also testing the humility that could accompany it because it is not a joke to eat the grass.

— TERESING CASTILLO

On that afternoon, the community also witnessed for the first time, the phenomenon of the petals. Although the community had in their garden a few pots of small roses, these were nowhere near the quality or quantity seen in the showers.

When I stood up, there were petals.

— TERESING CASTILLO

During the Mass, I was surprised because there were petals in front of us. On the side, there were rose pots with flowers, rose petals, and also on the side. But we were wondering, nobody is moving in our place. We just saw the petals in front of us!

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

Doon sa binlessingan ni Monsignor, marami.

[The site blessed by the Monsignor had many petals.]

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

According to Teresing, this shower was the sign that then still skeptical Monsignor Obviar had been praying for. The prioress then related Mary's message for the community. The Virgin asked them to believe and to keep the apparitions a secret until she advised otherwise. Then as if prefiguring events to come, she stressed that they should love each other as true sisters, love and obey the Mother prioress, and not envy Teresing for she suffered greatly. She asked them to gather the petals, make the spot sacred, venerate the grounds and giving her maternal blessing, requested that the monastery be known as "Our Lady's Carmel."

Teresing returned at five o'clock the same afternoon and again found the Lady waiting for her:

I ask this from Carmel. I wish that my image be placed here. This place must be cleaned so that it may become a shrine for prayer.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Mother's Grief

On the 16th of September, Teresing saw her lady descend from above accompanied by little angels:

Mukha lang ang nakikita ko, maliliit. [I saw only their faces; they were small.] And then the angels beside her as she, as she came down, *nawawala isa-isa* [the angels disappeared one by one].

— TERESING CASTILLO

But as the Lady reached the vine, Teresing observed that there was a look of sadness on Mary's face. This was to be the beginning of a series of messages directed towards two unbelieving nuns:

Little one, two of my daughters refuse to believe me. They dislike you also. Pray for them and let no bitterness find place in your heart.

Then the Lady went on to request that her image be struck:

I want a statue of myself to be made so that my little ones can see me. Describe me to your chaplain because I wish my statue to look as you see me, and to be as large as that of Our Lady of Lourdes which stands inside the cloister.

Months later, this statue would become the object of public scrutiny and veneration, and there would be reports of all sorts of unusual occurrences and supposedly miraculous events connected with it. This request for a statue parallels that of the one given at Rue du Bac in France, the fulfillment of which was to become St. Catherine Labouré's life-long burden.

More Messages

From the 17th to the 26th of September, the Virgin conversed at length with Teresing, giving her many messages, some of them for her own spiritual growth, others for the community, and the outside world.

The emphasis or the stress was on humility, simplicity, penance, prayers. . . . We also talked about what is most needed is the prayer of the rosary but praying with devotion, not mechanical, meditating while praying the rosary which very few understand.

— TERESING CASTILLO

Mary also requested that she be honored on Saturday and entrusted Teresing with several secrets.

Yes, there was *pero* [but] I cannot commit myself. There's also one for me, one for the community in Lipa, and one for the world and I'll tell you this much, although you will not find it there—one for China, not Russia.

— TERESING CASTILLO

There is another one, she says, which concerns Mother Cecilia.

Both Teresing's and Mother Cecilia's accounts continue to specify, however, that Mary grieved over the unbelief of the two nuns.

Mother Jacinta, now prioress of Carmel, then a postulant, admits to her own severe doubt at that time:

It is not only in this particular apparition that I am not enthusiastic. In general, I am not enthusiastic about apparitions. I only believe in apparitions that are approved by the church. So exteriorly I would accept that it's nice, but interiorly, I do not like it.

I do not really like to be the visionary but maybe there is a bit of competition or, who is this Teresing who would be so privileged, something like that.

She held on to her disbelief for 40 years, but has since come to a change of heart. *

As the apparitions at the vine progressed, however, the Lady's lamentation began to focus on one unbelieving nun, whom she did not name, but whom she asked much prayer for.

Teresing recalls:

Her soul and salvation means so much to her (Our Lady) so she said, "Help, and tell the sisters to pray, pray." But ako *naman*, we didn't know who the sister was. I didn't ask who because I don't like *naman* to ask.

*Du: to the time constraints of the documentary, we were not able to include the fact that one of the reasons that contributed to Mother Jacinta's change of heart was that she believed she had been healed of a kidney ailment through prayers and the application of a petal from one of the showers.

It is of course impossible to say for certain who the Virgin was referring to, but some of the nuns recall one particular novice, held in high regard by the community at the time, who was unusually vocal about her opposition to the apparitions.

During those days I could hear her ridiculing me, ridiculing Mother Cecilia.

— TERESING CASTILLO

Suddenly she came and then she shook my head. Yes, she shook it like that. And then she told me, "*Ikaw, para kang bata! Sunod ka nang sunod. Hindi ka maniwala.*" ["You are like a child, simply following what you're told. Don't believe them."] Many times she is not joining our community.

The next morning, because of the message that the apparition should be blessed by Monsignor, by the Bishop, I did, I did not see her. I think she did not join.

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

Mother Jacinta also remembers the novice:

And this novice told me, I remember that very well, she said, "Why do you go here? It's better to go to the Blessed Sacrament."

And Mary's message on September 21, 1948 became more specific:

To my daughter who does not believe me, I do not oblige you to believe. It is enough that you do not believe. But do not block nor debase my sacred place, nor despise my words.

I do not oblige you to listen nor to obey them if you do not wish to, for you have free will. Neither should you honor me on Saturdays if you are not inclined to. . . . Perchance this will be my last message for you.

Coincidentally, the novice was among the many who were to subsequently leave Carmel within the year.

Sister Clotilde fully believes that this novice had intentions of discrediting the apparitions. She cannot however remember the novice's exact words:

Parang she will do something against, [in] contradiction to the apparition.

She must believe me if she wants to possess peace of spirit and also for the sake of my Son.

The Lady's message of September 17, 1948

Sister Clotilde remembers when the sister in question left the convent:

Well, that time, she became very thin, very thin. And you know, her eyes are very sharp, like those who are dying. The eyes are very sharp, you'll be afraid.

Mrs. Severina Milan, the former Sister Stephanie of the Cross, O.C.D., also remembers her:

Nakita ko siya noong paalis na, nasa big room, pero hindi kami nag-usap. Kita ko lang siya, kita ko expression ng mukha niya, parang yun bang nakakatakot na kita mo talagang siya, pero parang nakakatakot dahil ang tao pagka kontra sa isang bagay, makita mo sa expression ng mukha niya.

[I saw her as she was about to leave. She was in the big room but we did not talk. The expression on her face was frightening. You could see it was her but it was frightening because when one is against something, you can see it in the expression of the face.]

Mary, Mediatrice of All Grace

In the course of the apparitions, the Lady reportedly allowed the prioress to reveal to the entire community some of the events that had been happening to Teresina—events of which they had no prior knowledge. From then on, the community was kept abreast of the developments.

We seldom talk to each other. But then, when we have recreation, that's the time when some news are told to us. For those who believe, you can see in their faces. They're all very happy, we clap the hands, and we really show our happiness. And there are others who are silent. You don't know what is in their hearts.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

On September 26, the Lady appeared for the last of the promised 15 days. She counseled the community to love one another, encouraging simplicity, humility and obedience, and stated that her Son was the Way, the Truth and the Life. She asked that a Mass be held on the 12th of every month. She reminded the community to consecrate themselves to her. Before vanishing, she finally identified herself saying, "*I am Mary, Mediatrice of All Grace.*"

She went on to describe her meeting with Jesus at Calvary and said:

Meditate on this and see how much the Mother and Son worked and suffered together to save the world.

The Lady's message on September 18, 1948

Is this then why Mary has manifested herself over and over again for the last 150 years? If only to tell her children that there is a God in Heaven and that He does love?

This theme has unfailingly pervaded each and every visionary's testimony throughout the history of Marian apparitions. Could there be truth then to Teresina's story? How could a sheltered girl who hardly ever read anything except notes on a music sheet, be capable of such profundity? Would it be impossible to believe that grace had fallen superabundantly upon the little monastery of Lipa Carmel?

Mary, Mediatix of All Grace

In the course of the apparitions, the Lady reportedly allowed the prioress to reveal to the entire community some of the events that had been happening to Teresing—events of which they had no prior knowledge. From then on, the community was kept abreast of the developments.

We seldom talk to each other. But then, when we have recreation, that's the time when some news are told to us. For those who believe, you can see in their faces. They're all very happy, we clap the hands, and we really show our happiness. And there are others who are silent. You don't know what is in their hearts.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

On September 26, the Lady appeared for the last of the promised 15 days. She counseled the community to love one another, encouraging simplicity, humility and obedience, and stated that her Son was the Way, the Truth and the Life. She asked that a Mass be held on the 12th of every month. She reminded the community to consecrate themselves to her. Before vanishing, she finally identified herself saying, "*I am Mary, Mediatix of All Grace.*"

JK: Not "All Graces"?

Teresing: No.

JK: Mary . . .

Teresing: Mediatrix of All Grace, and then she blessed and left and disappeared.

After the 15 apparitions at the vine, petal showers began to recur with increasing frequency inside the cloisters. On September 30, the nuns found their cells scattered with petals. On October 3, hundreds of petals covered the entire staircase where Teresing and the prioress had struggled with the devil.

We were all in the chapel. I forgot my meditation book so I asked permission, "Can I go out to get my meditation book?" When I went out, I saw the whole stairs carpeted with petals! You know the stairs going up, the one there with the out-sisters, no? That—full *na* full!

So I shouted, "Shower! Shower!" And when it's like that, we all run.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

The atmosphere of the convent was euphoric; to cries of "Shower! Shower!", the nuns would come running to gather the petals excitedly like children scrambling for scattered coins.

Sister Elizabeth of the Sacred Heart, another one who was present at the time, recalls the frequency of these showers:

I remember there was a shower there; there was also a shower *doon sa* end of this, this cloister.

At this time, the angels were also said to have visited Teresina in her cell. Sister Clotilde recounts Mother Cecilia telling them of this:

Sister Clotilde: Then she said one time, "Teresita is playing with the angel, jack n' poy."

JK: Jack n' poy? With the angel?

Sister Clotilde: Oo [yes], playing with her, she told us. And then, one time, the angel, I think, he was, stayed in her lap. And then she gathered the, like the clouds—is it not, the angel, when you show the picture, there are clouds? Then she gathered it like cotton. But it is disappearing little by little, but she wrapped it in a piece of paper. But she showed us that and then she closed afterwards.

JK: She showed you the paper?

Sister Clotilde: The piece of clouds that she gathered on the lap of Teresita.

JK: You saw it? (*incredulous*)

Sister Clotilde: Yes, just like a cotton . . . *Nagdudula ba* [It was disappearing little by little]. . . . And then one time, Teresita was not able to hear Mass, she was in bed. And then when Mother Cecilia went up, she told us the angel brought her Communion because when she arrived there, Teresita showed, opened her mouth, and she showed the Host inside her mouth.

This idea of receiving Communion from an angel may have seemed blasphemous at the time, for little was known of the fact that the children of Fatima had received Communion in a similar manner, as had Melanie of La Salette—or so she claimed. And much later, at Garabandal (Spain), there

would be actual footage of what looked like a Host materializing on a visionary's tongue, which she claimed was administered by an angel.⁶ Since then, so many other apparitions have been reported, and only a handful so far have been approved by the local bishops. And of the others, it is only in the last few years that documentation on these has been available. But there is an indication of this same manifestation in at least the events reported on Peñablanca, Chile.⁷

The Blue Bird and Other Events

Other incredible events were said to have taken place at Lipa Carmel. There are accounts of a blue bird sighted within the convent premises during the apparitions at the vine.

Sometimes on top of the house, of the roof. Sometimes, just on the, perching on a plant.

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

It's a *ganitong kalaking* bird [It was a bird about this big] (shows the size of the bird with her hands) . . . Usually it stops on top of a tree. . . . And you'll hear the sound! It's really singing! . . . So I would run, always run to look for the bird. And sometimes she brings messages too.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

As big as the, as the *kalapati* [dove], like doves but blue. . . . I don't know if that it's singing or what, *basta* I heard a voice, *basta magbatian namin, dudungaw ako* [when we notice it, I look out the window]. *Di* we are not allowed to peep but we peeped because the bird is there.

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

The bluebird somehow figured prominently in the events, for in those days almost everyone was aware that it was in some way connected to the apparitions.

A Mass was held at the apparition site on October 7 as the Virgin had asked, and the entire community consecrated itself to Mary following the devotion of St. Louis Grignon de Monfort.⁸

During the time of the apparitions, the nuns found in their cells little messages signed "BVM" in a handwriting unlike Teresing's or Mother Cecilia's. There were also accounts of a spinning sun, of a strange light on top of the vine, of plants in the garden turning to face the apparition site, or a cloud-like figure seen descending from the skies, and the heady fragrance of roses or *azucenas* (white lilies) that would often fill the cloisters at unexpected times.

Teresing had several other mystical experiences, impossible at this point to render in all its incredible detail. The prioress documents, for instance, that the girl had visions of the Sacred Heart, of a multitude of angels and saints, of St. Cecilia and St. Therese of Lisieux in particular, and of a Lady with whom she took long walks in a lovely garden full of birds and flowers.

The postulant was also seen to lose consciousness, and then to silently re-enact, while lying on the floor, the agony of Christ on the cross—a phenomenon witnessed by the prioress, Bishop Obviar, and the rest of the community.

Noon, naka-stretched arms siya. [That time, her arms were stretched out.] But her hands are closed like that, and very stiff. You cannot move. Even if you try to, you cannot move. As if she is unconscious like that. And her feet are together, like the crucifix.

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

Her hands, stretched, no. And we tried really to bend. Nothing, we could not. Very stiff really. . . . Her face is very sad. And I feel she is really enacting the agony.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

The seven last words would be re-enacted and we really did see it, I really did see it.

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

Talagang kitang-kita mo. Kung ano yung first word hanggang sa seventh word, e, iyong-iyon, ang nakikita mo sa kanyang mukha. Lalo na yung "I thirst." Talagang ang lawit ng dila niya, ang laki.

[The First Word to the Seventh, that's exactly what you saw on her face. Even more so at "I thirst." Her tongue was really extended and it was very long.]

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

And then, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken" —she was looking like that (looks upward).

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

. . . Yung sa last [at the last words] "Into Thy hands I commend My Spirit," naganoon e (head slumps). Talagang akala namin namatay. Sumigaw na kami, naku, akala namin namatay talaga, oo. [Her head slumped like this. We really thought she had died. We screamed. We thought she really died.]

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

It is interesting to note that this same phenomenon finds parallel in at least one other current-day apparition—that of Naju, Korea,⁹ where the visionary Julia was also observed to undergo the passion of Christ in the presence of

many priests and religious. In Naju, however, the phenomenon progressed to another stage—stigmata and marks of other torture were seen to appear on the visionary's body. *

The Last Appearance at the Vine

Mary appeared one last time at the vine—on November 12, she came with this message:

Pray, my child. The people do not heed my words. Tell my daughters that there will be persecutions, unrest, and bloodshed in your country. The enemy of the church will try to destroy the faith which Jesus had established and died for. The church will suffer much.

Pray for the conversion of sinners throughout the world. Pray for those who rejected me and those who do not believe my messages in the different parts of the world. I am really sad but consoled by those who believe and trust me. Spread the meaning of the rosary because this will be the instrument for peace throughout the world. Tell the people that the rosary must be said with devotion. Propagate the devotion to my Immaculate Heart. Do penance for priests and nuns but be not afraid, for the love of my Son will soften the hardest of hearts, and my motherly love will be their strength to crush the enemies of God.

* As of press time, many more details on other apparitions have been coming to light. In the Marian apparitions of Soufanieh, Syria—approved by the Catholic Bishop of Damascus—the visionary, a young married woman named Mirna Nazour, has also been seen to undergo the passion of Christ. (See: *The Publican, The Miracle of Damascus*. California: The Messengers of Unity, 1989.)

What I ask here is the same I asked at Fatima. I bless this community in a very special blessing. All these can be revealed now. I repeat to you that I am Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace. This is my last apparition here. ¹⁰

And with this, she rose up to the clouds and disappeared.

Her words were prophetic, for great persecution was to follow, and many lives and reputations would be ruined.

The Lady's visits at the vine finally came to a close, but one final phase of the apparitions was yet to unfold—one incredible phase that was to fascinate an entire nation, and bring to public attention the young visionary of Lipa and the messages of the beautiful Lady on the vine.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Shower! Shower!

Two days before the Virgin's final apparition, petals had begun to fall outside the convent building. Mary had indicated in her last message that people would come, and so they did. In the succeeding days, more such showers were reported, and as the word spread, people began to flock in increasing numbers to the convent grounds.

But Monsignor Alfredo Verzosa, Bishop of Lipa, was not pleased with these developments, and had ordered the Carmelite sisters to withdraw the statue from public veneration.

Aside from the eyewitness testimonies, we have the accounts of Monsignors Simeon Racelis and Gregorio Salvatus, who had both heard of this from Bishop Obviar on one of the rare occasions when he commented on Lipa.

Bishop Godofredo Pedernal, on the other hand, related what he had heard from another eyewitness, a certain Romy Malabanan, who has unfortunately passed away.

When Bishop Verzosa heard about this, the many people coming to it, he would like to stop it.

— MONSIGNOR SIMEON RACELIS

Verzosa is a man who would not believe so easily. So he wanted to know more.

— MONSIGNOR GREGORIO SALVATUS

Sabi ng madre [the nuns said], "Monsignor, how about coming to the monastery and visit us?"

Sabi ng obispo [the bishop said], "To visit you? No, I will go there not to visit you but to see to it that my orders are going to be fulfilled."

— FR. SENEN ENCARNACION

On the afternoon of November 19, he hastened to Lipa in anger, determined to chastise his auxiliary bishop and to put an end to the entire affair.

And when he reached that place, the monastery, when he opened the door, a shower of roses at the very steps came.

— MONSIGNOR SIMEON RACELIS

A shower of petals fell on him and he knelt down and he could not utter any word.

— MONSIGNOR GREGORIO SALVATUS

I saw Monsignor Verzosa standing with two Carmelite nuns kneeling in front of him surrounded by petals. His feet were surrounded by petals.

— ATTORNEY ANTONIO MANGUIAT

Nagulat ang obispo. Dinampot nang ganyan. [The bishop was surprised. He picked up something from the floor.] Petal of flower, *marami* [there were many]. Almost one plate full.

— FR. SENEN ENCARNACION

He started looking around, trying to find where the petals came from. . . . That was the only time I witnessed the showers.

— FR. JUAN CORONEL



Teresita Castillo, at the piano



Above: Teresita Castillo, visionary of Lipa, prior to her entrance at Carmel and right, as a novice at Carmel, with her parents Mr. and Mrs. Modesto Castillo





Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D., prioress of Lipa Carmel
1946-50; the visionary's primary confidante



Monsignor Alfredo Verzosa,
Bishop of Lipa 1916-1950



Monsignor Alfredo Obviar,
Auxiliary Bishop of Lipa and
Chaplain of Lipa Carmel in
1948



The main protagonists in the story of Lipa:
Teresita Castillo, Mother Cecilia,
and Bishop Obviar



Carmel of Lipa in 1950: the convent and the Church of Our Lady
Mediatrice of All Grace



The community of Lipa Carmel at the time of the apparitions



Top pair, left to right:
Sr. Elizabeth of the Sacred Heart, O.C.D.,
portress of Carmel in 1948; now an outsider
at Carmel

Bottom pair, left to right
Sr. Monica of the Savior, postulant at Carmel
in 1948; now Sr. Clotilde Nicolas, O.S.A.



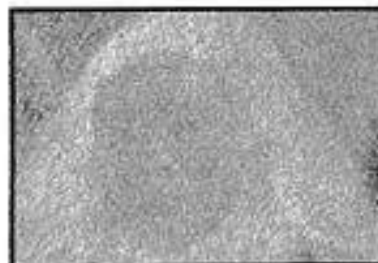
**Sr. Stephanie of the Cross, novice at Carmel in 1948;
now Mrs. Severina Milan**



**Sr. Therese, novice at Carmel in 1948;
now Mother Therese of the Holy Face, H.F.J.**



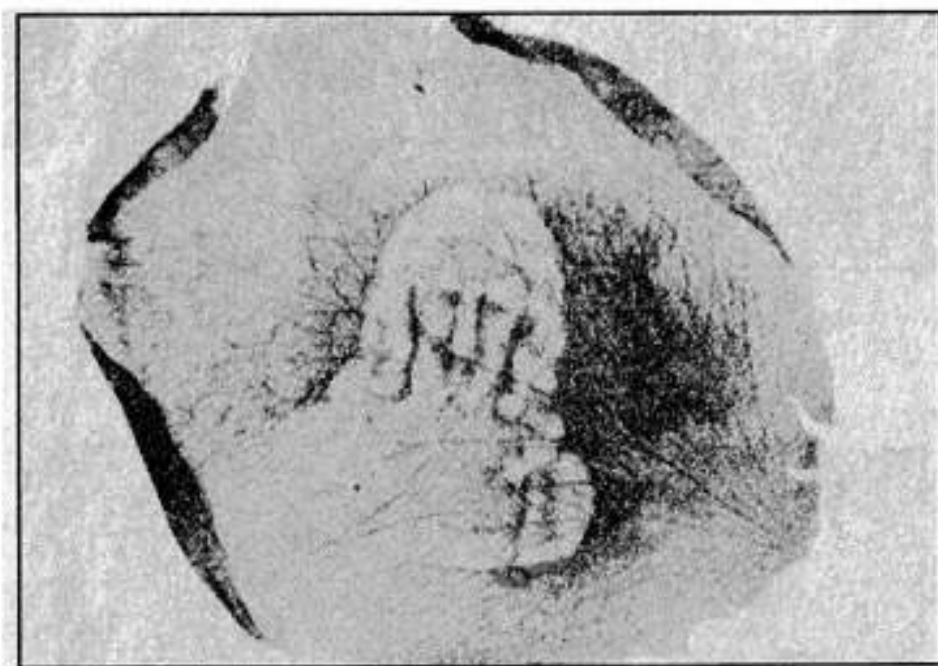
**Mother Jacinta of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, novice at Carmel in
1948; now prioress of Lipa Carmel**



**Sr. Alphonse of Mary as a novice at Carmel in 1948; and before
her death in 1990**

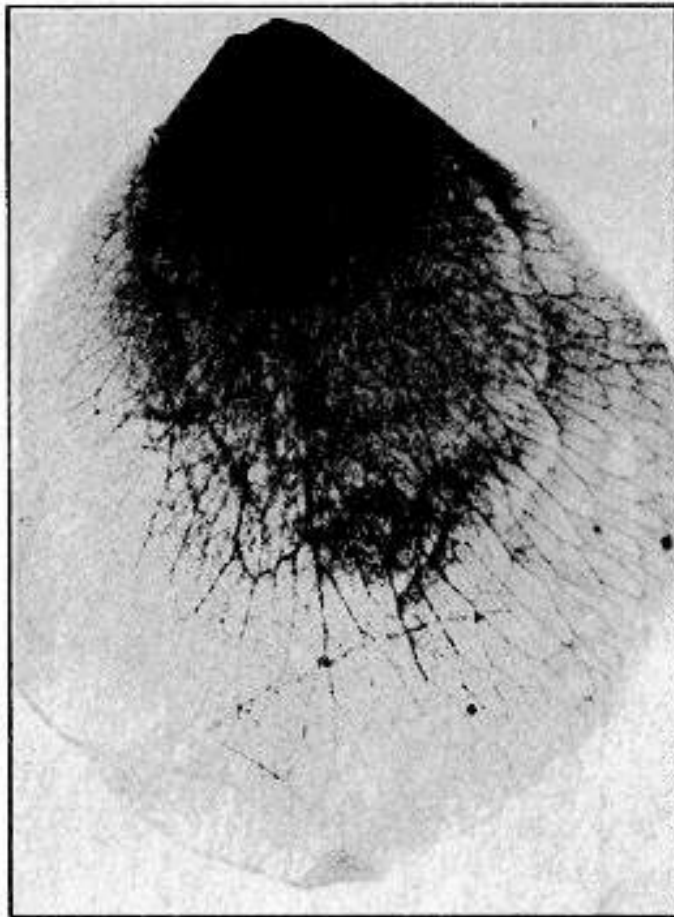


The garden at Carmel Lipa circa 1948

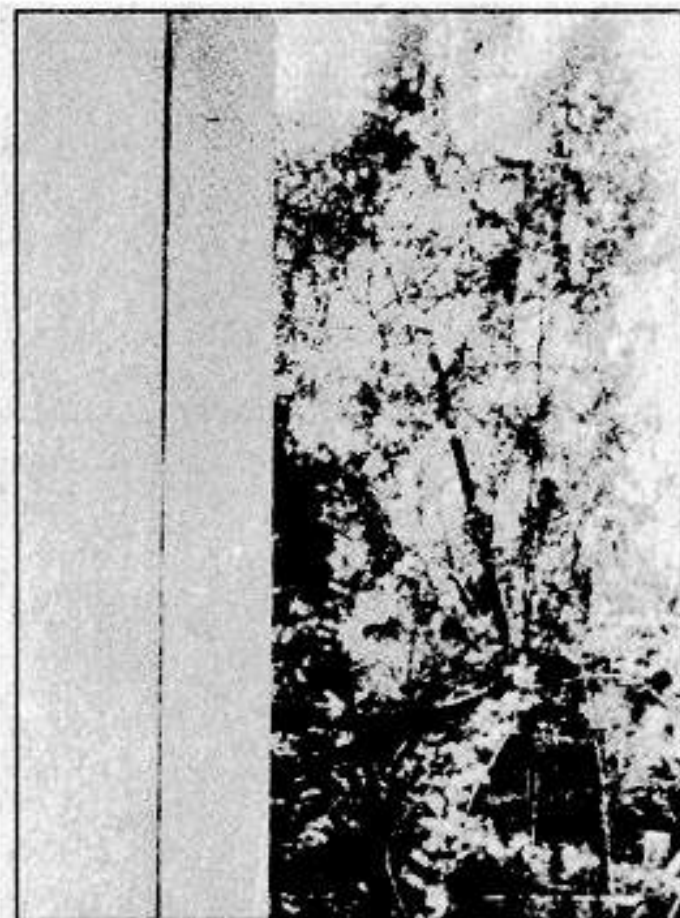


One of the petals from the showers of 1948,
with image of the head of Christ

Another petal from
1948 — with image of
St. Joseph



The vine where the
Mediatrix appeared —
circa 1948





The statue of Our Lady, Mediatrix of All Grace

According to Romy, the old man knelt down, then he prayed.
And then when the sisters came out to talk to him

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

He was speechless.

— ATTORNEY ANTONIO MANGUIAT

He was astounded.

— FR. JUAN CORONEL

When the Bishop left, he told the prioress, "You can return the
statue to the window."

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

And by that, he did not prohibit anymore the people from
going to that place, and he did not prohibit the celebration of
Mass.

— MONSIGNOR SIMEON RACELIS

We sent some of these petals to Rome. He had written a letter
to the pope as a private gift, telling the pope of the events here.
Personal, not official.

— FR. JUAN CORONEL

But that was not the bishop's only experience with the
petals. Armando Mendoza Jr., the baranggay captain of
Granja, remembers one incident when as a sacristan, he had
helped the Bishop dress after Mass:

*Humalik ako sa kamay, tapos inalis ko yung kanyang sapatos.
Sabi ko, "Bishop, kayo pala'y nagtatago ng mga roses sa inyong
sapatos. Bakit, ilang petals ito?" Sabi niya, "Hindi ko, wala
yan, wala kaninang umaga nang alisin ko iyan. Noong isyuot
ko, wala iyan!"*

*E kako, "Siya, pumatak ho sa loob ng inyong sapatos. Akin na
ho." Siguro, pag hindi tatlo, apat. Kinuha niya ang dalawa,
binigay sa akin ang dalawa. . . . Parang manghang-mangha
siya.*

[I kissed his hand, then I removed his shoes. I said, "Bishop, I didn't know you were hiding petals in your shoes. Why are there several petals here?" He said, "They were not here this morning when I put my shoes on."

I said, "They fell into your shoes. Let me have them." There were three or four petals. He got two and gave me two. He was stunned.]

Much later, on December 6, 1948, an official account of the apparitions at the vine would be published with Verzosa's imprimatur.

News of the Petal Showers Spreads

With the bishop's sudden turnabout, crowds increased. The press got wind of the incredible events, and from November 1948 until after the verdict was released in 1951, the national dailies carried news of the famed petal showers of Lipa. International publications were also later to carry stories of the astounding showers at Carmel.¹¹ Public response was tremendous. Lipa became a virtual mecca of devotees and was hailed as the next Lourdes in a press release by the Reuters press agency.¹² Thousands upon thousands from all over the country poured into the city and into the yard of the Carmelite convent. And characteristically, Filipino film producers simply could not resist turning it into a movie, *Ang Milagro ng Birhen* [The Miracle of the Virgin], featuring two of the country's most popular stars, Pancho Magalona and Tita Duran.¹³

In November 1948, the newspapers published accounts of the visit of Mrs. Aurora Quezon, wife of the late President Manuel Quezon.¹⁴

Dumating daw siya, puno ng tao, hindi siya makapasok. Ngayon, kagisa-gisa, nagkaroon ng commotion. "Ano yon?" ikaniya. "Aymarami hong petal nalaglag." [When she arrived, the place was full and she could not enter. There was a commotion. "What is happening?" she asked. "There were many petals falling."]

Yung kasama niya na bayaw, nalaglag sa harapan niya isang petal [her brother-in-law was with her; a petal fell in front of him]. He happened to be a Mason. That converted him, the petal.

— MARIANO SIDECO

In May 1949, then President of the Philippine Republic, Elpidio Quirino attended Mass and joined the vast crowds milling around the convent in hopes of witnessing a petal shower.¹⁵

Masses were held daily at the convent grounds and rosaries were said constantly.¹⁶ Hundreds lined up in the hot sun waiting for their turn to pray before the image of Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace. The statue—which had been commissioned and finished in October—was encased in glass, and exposed to the public with Verzosa's permission.¹⁷

Novenas stamped with the imprimatur of Bishop Obviar and Bishop Verzosa were distributed. In May 1949, prominent leaders of lay Catholic organizations including some top government officials, issued a manifesto urging a national novena from May 22 to 30 to the Blessed Mother, Mediatrix of All Grace. This was to culminate in a great communion all over the Philippines.¹⁸

Moreover, a church to be known as the Chapel of Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace began to rise, funded entirely by public donations¹⁹ and would be finished within the brief span of two years.

The Crowds Increase

Estimates of the crowds at Lipa numbered into the thousands. On Nov. 28 for instance, *The Manila Times* reported 30,000 people present at the convent.²⁰ On January 23, 1949, during the laying of the cornerstone of what was to be the church of Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace—a ceremony officiated by Bishop Obviar with numerous priests in attendance—crowd estimates ranged from 20 to 70 to 500 thousand.²¹ So great was the national preoccupation with Lipa that in March 1949, the country's flag carrier, Philippine Airlines, began a series of special chartered flights from Manila to Lipa and back, at the then staggering cost of 250 pesos.²²

Felix Bautista Jr., publisher, journalist, and former Press Undersecretary under the Aquino administration, recounts the exhilaration of those days:

All I can remember at this point is that I was only one of a virtual mob of you know, buses, private cars, jeepneys—all making a beeline and making a pilgrimage, full of people of whom I could sense a certain deep and abiding faith in the Virgin. I saw cripples. I saw sick people brought there. And I could see—you know what it reminded me of now? Could be the same kind of atmosphere I saw when I went to Lourdes. The same faith was there, the same fanaticism, if you wish. And here were all these people, all of them waiting, most of the time vainly for another shower of roses so that they could go home with one of those precious petals.

Nung sinabi ng [when people cried] "Shower!" I forgot that I was a sister! And I sat on this, on the window sill, and I put my, I placed my leg like that, then the other one followed (moves feet and legs as if climbing out of a window). And I even picked, and I was really excited because *talagang ang kamay ko, nanlalamig* [my hands were really cold] and then *ito mga balahibo, buhok niya, no* [my hair was standing on end]. And I was really trying to get each and everything! And then, *pagka*

nandoon, magaganda, pagkatapos, makikita ko doon, doon naman ang puwesto ko, ganoon [when the petals fell there, I would say, "They're beautiful," then I would see them fall over there and I would go there at once]. I really kept them.

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Ang mga tao, parating sa itaas nakatingin, nag-aantay, mayamaya magsigawan sila. "Magsashower!" ika, "Magsashower, namamango!" Dabil yun ho ang sign, na darating ang petal at mamamango.

[The crowd was always looking up, waiting. Then later they would shout, "A shower is coming! There is fragrance in the air!" That was the sign that the petals were coming—the fragrance.]

— GUILLERMO MILAN

Eh, naglabasan kami, nakita namin, mataas na mataas. . . . Parang madaming maiitim sa langit. . . . Sama-sama sila, hindi sila naghiwa-hiwalay pero may direction sila ng pinupuntahan. Parang gumaganon-ganoon sila.

[We all went out and saw them high up in the sky There were many dark spots in the sky They moved together. They didn't separate but they moved in a certain direction.]

— ARMANDO MENDOZA JR.

Hindi sa tabi, hindi sa ano, basta talagang kita na galing talaga sa alapaap.

[You could really see that it came from the clouds.]

— LALYN CASTRO

And I saw petals, rose petals, red, red rose petals falling—not falling straight but sort of fluttering down. . . . The petals were falling flat to the ground in spite of the breeze going across the courtyard.

— RETIRED GENERAL GODOFREDO JULIANO

There were only very few petals falling from out of nowhere.

— AMELIA KISON

We did not know where it came from. It cannot come from anybody. We just saw it's flying, the petals flying.

— GOVERNOR VICENTE A. MAYO

Newspaper accounts report that on unusually windy and rainy days—when even military planes were grounded—the petals would fall in a straight vertical direction and only within the convent premises.²³

And the pilgrims and onlookers rushed to get them:

The petals were falling, fluttering down in spite of the breeze going across the courtyard.

— RETIRED GENERAL GODOFREDO JULIANO

There was this mad scramble to get them.

— FELIX BAUTISTA, JR.

Naghahagipan sila—nadampot sila. . . Sariwa na ang kulay niya, medyo dark, dark rose . . . medyo makapal na parang velvet. [The people were grabbing the petals, picking them up. They were fresh, dark rose in color, and somewhat thick, like velvet.]

— BELEN MAYO

May rosas at may puti. [There were pink and white ones.]

— FELICIDAD TORRES

We grabbed, everybody grabbed, tried to grab the petals.

— GOVERNOR VICENTE A. MAYO

Bishop Godofredo Pedernal, who was then rector of the seminary of Mount Carmel in Sariyaya, Quezon, had two encounters with the shower:

Personally, twice I saw this shower of petals. The first time it was falling down from the gutter of the building, the convent. And so when the petals were falling like that to the ground, people went up, climbing the drains of the convent.

The description of his second encounter with the petals is even more amazing for he saw an entire rose materialize out of thin air:

About 10 meters, it just, it just appeared maybe six feet from the ground, just a rose, and then the petals fell and the people around, they rushed there. . . . I could not go to pick up a petal because people started to go there.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Miracle of the Roses

According to *The Manila Times*, horticulturists had expressed the opinion that the petals belonged to a foreign species of rose.²⁴ And an article in a foreign magazine called *The Scapular* stated that the petals were tested in the laboratories of a famous American university, and reported that the petals belonged to a Russian species of rose.²⁵

Petal Images

Some of the petals were found to contain images of the Sacred Heart, of the Virgin and Child, of the Holy Family, of the Head of Christ, of Saint Joseph, and many others²⁶—petals which devotees have preserved over the years. Strangely enough, the petals have not crumbled despite the passage of 40 and more years. A closer look reveals the petal veins to be unbroken.

Delly Dionisio, the owner of one such petal describes it:

*Nung matagal na, sabi ko, "Tingnan ko nga itong petal ko."
Abal Nung aking tingnan ang petal, mayroon. "Hay!" sabi ko,
"Mayroon akong mga image ang petal."*

[After a long time, I said, "Let me look at my petal." When I looked, I said, "Oh my! There are images in my petals."]

There are other testimonies of people who claimed to have found petals in their clothes, prayer books and homes.²⁷

Sister Amelia Fernandez, O.P. who lived in Jaro, Iloilo, had prayed and asked God to give her a petal. She found two: one in her prayer book and the other while riding on a jeepney. These she pressed in her missal:

After pressing it, around six o' clock in the afternoon, I saw two hearts: one heart pierced with the sword and the one is with the cross, with this sign.

— SISTER AMELIA FERNANDEZ, O.P.

Thousands of requests for petals poured into the convent everyday, sometimes even from as far as Mindanao.²⁸ The demand for petals was so great and the supply so scarce that the Carmelite outsiders had to resort to raffles²⁹ and to distributing bottles of water in which the petals had been dipped.³⁰

And I have to volunteer to the Carmelite sisters to help them in giving out this water soaked with petals to the devotees that come because plenty of people came with bottles, empty bottles with them, and they tried to ask from the sisters water soaked with petals and so that was my work.

— GOVERNOR VICENTE A. MAYO

There was even, at the time, a group loosely called the "Carmel boys" who helped distribute the water and formed a choir for the Masses.

But while the petal showers continued to be the "main attraction"—so to speak—much attention also began to focus on the statue of the Mediatrix of All Grace, which reportedly moved inside its glass case.³¹

Bigla hong nagsigawan ang tao. Mayroon hong naiyak pa at hagulgulan. Di napatingin po ako sa, sa mahal na Birhen. Nakita kong biglang-bigla na ang mata niya ay nakama—, nakatitig sa malayo.

[The people suddenly shouted. Some even cried. I looked at the image of the Blessed Virgin. Suddenly, I saw that her eyes had raised and were gazing into the distance.]

— LUISA MAYO

Na-witness ko rin po ang pag-ibo ng rosary sa kamay ng Blessed Virgin. Parang umiisod pong parang siya po ay nagrosary.

[I also witnessed the rosary moving in the Blessed Virgin's hand. It was moving as if she were praying the rosary.]

— LUZ PALMARES

The image of the Virgin was encased in glass and there were two vases of flowers beside the image—lilies and *azucenas*. I saw the flowers moving to and fro, swaying as if it was being moved by hand but the rosary didn't move. The curtain at the back didn't move at all. And there were other people who saw that. Especially the children.

— DANNY DOLOR

I saw the flowers moving in all directions without moving the stem. So I felt as if my hair were going up! Then it stopped. After a while, that happened on the right side of the Virgin. Then on the left side, the other, the other flower pot there with *azucena* started to move the same direction, one direction. Because if it were being influenced by the wind, it will just move in one direction. But it was moving in all directions.

— MARIANO SIDECO

On Good Friday, April 1949, there were reports that images of the crucified Christ and His sorrowing Mother appeared on the aluminum sheet used to cover the statue in accordance with Lenten church rites.³²

My assistant foreman called me to tell me that something is happening in front of the niche of the Blessed Virgin. It happened *daw* on the same day that Bing Ledesma of the College of Law of San Beda was with us. So we went together, the two of us. Then we talked about hallucination or something like that.

And we made sure that our minds were all right. So when we arrived there, he saw other figures. What I saw is the image, the profile of St. Therese of the Child Jesus.

— MARIANO SIDECO

In May 1949, the national dailies reported that hundreds of people from San Pablo, Laguna had seen Mary Mediatrix of All Grace appear briefly in the sky above Sampaloc Lake, just as they were about to embark on a fluvial procession with an exact replica of the image in Lipa.³³

Sister Mary Celine of Jesus, O. C. D, then a young girl who had not yet entered Carmel, looked up in the sky and saw:

Sister Celine: Our Lady appeared in the sky reflected in the lake. . . . The image of Our Lady, white. Exactly.

JK: How big was she?

Sister Celine: It's just smaller than our statue because it was so high.

But apparently the Mediatrix was also seen in other parts of the Philippines. There were reports that many had seen her in the San Agustin Cathedral of Cagayan de Oro City.³⁴ Nieves Gonzales Gabucan recalls the day she squeezed her way into the fully packed church with her husband and family:

All of a sudden, on the right side of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from the wall, I saw a light and that light, it was just light. Then I was surprised; the light was approaching me and it became the image or the whole figure of a beautiful Lady clad with white garments and her feet were staying on a piece of cloud and she was beautiful and sad. And I was looking at her, everything was quiet. The time when I saw that everything was quiet, as if I was alone on a meadow and my heart was so light and it was, it is, I could not describe in words how I felt. As if I was elevated, you know, a little.

She appeared maybe around 10 seconds or 15 seconds or so. I looked at her from head to foot, and when I said, "Mary Mediatrix of All Graces," she smiled a little and then she went backward, backward slowly and growing shorter and shorter and shorter until she disappeared from the same wall where she came from. And when she disappeared, all the noise, all the noise of the church, my husband, my kids were pulling out my skirt, "Where is it? Where is it?" They were so noisy. And I could not, I was so dumbfounded I could not tell them because I thought that they saw the same thing so I didn't need to tell them anything. But I was surprised when I saw that image. Nobody was around, as if I was alone in that time.

I said, "All of you have not seen? Oh I thought you have seen too." Then my husband told me, "Why did you not touch me?" I said, "Well, how could I touch you, you were not around; when I saw it, all of you disappeared. I was just alone."

In January, May, and July 1949, other petal showers were reported by the local dailies to have occurred in other districts of Manila, in private residences where replicas of the Mediatrix were enshrined.³⁵

CHAPTER NINE

Cures

Aside from a rather stupendous array of seemingly supernatural events, and the remarkable almost instantaneous conversions, there was yet what seemed to be an added grace, for reports began to surface that the petals of Lipa were effecting outstanding miraculous cures.

Socorro Mendoza Dichoso³⁶ was born to Dr. Telesforo Mendoza and Rosario Cosme on December 1948, at the height of the celebrated petal showers of Lipa. The baby had a soft swelling on the left side of her head which increased in size as time passed. Subsequent X-rays taken by Dr. Paulino Garcia later revealed a hole in the child's skull, more than 2 inches in diameter, causing her cranial membranes to protrude. Their only protective covering was the scalp. In medical terms, it was diagnosed as a case of "deficient ossification of the cranium with consequent protrusion of the membranes . . . containing cerebro-spinal fluid."³⁷

My brain was like a, very soft like a coconut, a young coconut that when you put your hands, it will really enter.

— SOCORRO MENDOZA DICHOSO

Dr. Mendoza told his wife that the case was very serious, and that the only remedy lay in sending the infant for treatment abroad. Mrs. Rosario Mendoza began a novena to Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace. Socorro in the meantime grew worse and on January 28, 1949, she fell into a deep stupor, which her father feared was a symptom of meningitis.

And then all of a sudden, I do not like anymore to cry and at around four o' clock in the afternoon, nothing, there was no life anymore.

— SOCORRO MENDOZA DICHOSO

And then I put the petal in her here (puts her hand on her head). Afterwards, by and by, my husband looked at her, "Oh, look, it's no more!" With the petal there, the brain receded and then we ran again to Dr. Paulino Garcia for the X-ray. And then Dr. Garcia said, "What did you do?"

— MRS. ROSARIO MENDOZA

They did not know what happened. *Biglang wala na, e.* [All of a sudden, it disappeared.]

— SOCORRO MENDOZA DICHOSO

The X-rays reportedly showed—impossible as it might seem—that the cavity in the skull had closed.

And I looked him up, you know, Dr. Mendoza. And I interviewed him and he gave me the copies of the X-rays, before and after, when there was this hole in the child's head and then when it magically, suddenly disappeared, miraculously disappeared. And I remember even that I was moved, as far as a young, idealistic, perhaps trying to be cynical or hard-boiled journalist could be moved, to the extent that when the UST joined an oratorical contest and I was asked to help in the writing of a piece for the UST contestant, I chose the miracle of Lipa as my theme. It won first prize, you know.

—FELIX B. BAUTISTA JR.

The copies of Socorro's X-rays are unfortunately no longer with the Mendozas. They were supposedly sent to Rome to substantiate the authenticity of the events at Lipa.

Another case in point is that of Nieves Gabucan's mother.

My mother was so weak. She was just skin and bones and the doctor said she would live just one week. She's going to die and she's too old to be operated because she has something like defect in the heart or whatever was that. They could not understand what the sickness is. So I went there, I prayed to Our Lady of Mediatrix of All Graces. I did not see her anymore actually like what I did in San Agustin Cathedral in Cagayan de Oro.

When I arrived in Manila, what I did was put the petals in the bottle and put some oil, coconut oil, and then I told my mom, I said, "I have gone to Lipa. I have asked for your life for ten years more. I asked God for ten years more for you to live."

So I put "O Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee." At the same time I made a cross with the oil in my hands, and then I brought the statue that I bought from Lipa and placed it beside my mother. I gave her a rosary.

— NIEVES GONZALES GABUCAN

That same afternoon, Nieves' mother was able to take in food for the first time in a week and to the amazement of the doctors, rapidly recovered her health in a matter of days.

She got well. She lived for 10 years.

— NIEVES GONZALES GABUCAN

On the 17th of February, 1949, a 5-month-old baby, Rosalina Pundan,³⁸ was brought to the clinic of Dr. Ricardo Raymundo of San Pablo City, Laguna. Suffering from convulsions and a distended abdomen, her condition had deteriorated so much so that her pulse vanished com-

pletely. When medication had failed, the doctor then thought of applying a Carmel petal on the child's abdomen, and after twelve minutes, her pulse returned to normal. Dr. Raymundo stated that he is inclined to believe that this is a supernatural cure.

In May 1949, Dr. Florentina Romero of Laguna applied a petal to her eight-month-old daughter Thelma,³⁹ who suffered from a case of intestinal obstruction. The doctor also started a novena to Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace. The child was scheduled for operation, but the attending physician at the last moment decided not to proceed for Thelma apparently recovered and the mass which had begun to form vanished.

On December 24, 1950, a local magazine⁴⁰ carried an article by Fr. Martin Casey, S.J., then head of the Chemistry Department of the Jesuit-run Ateneo University. In it he relates that after administering the last sacraments to a girl dying of cerebral hemorrhage in Misamis Oriental, he applied a Lipa petal to her forehead, and upon the ringing of the Angelus bell, the girl suddenly emerged from her deep stupor, as if nothing had happened.

Another case is that of Felix Bautista's father:

My father had a brain tumor and he had gone progressively blind to the point that when I brought him there, he was completely sightless. And I remember wiping his eyes with some of the water from there. And then the night after, we came back to Manila. I was helping him, you know, he wanted to exercise a little so we were walking, after supper; we were walking back and forth in our driveway. Suddenly, you know, he said, "There is the moon." And he could see that light up there. And before that it had been complete darkness.

Water which was bottled or in which petals were dipped and placed beside the image at Lipa reportedly also had miraculous healing powers.

One undeniably outstanding cure—simply because the result was visible to all—was that of Melania Maria Sunga.⁴¹ She was born in 1940 with a deformed right foot, the sole of which was curled up, in her own words, like the cooked shrimps her mother had been so fond of. Her foot was so deformed that she was never able to wear a pair of shoes or slippers; moreover, her leg had atrophied, shortened, and from disuse, wasted away to almost skin and bone.

She moved about by jumping and limping and was seen by the entire town as she painfully made her way to school. In 1949, when she was 9 years old, her uncle, now Monsignor Edmundo Abaya, then still a seminarian, brought the family a bottle of water which had been placed overnight beside the statue of Mary Mediatrix at Carmel Lipa. Mrs. Sunga, a daily church-goer, offered prayers and sacrifice and rubbed her daughter's crooked foot with the water from Lipa everyday for several weeks. One morning, Melania awoke and walked to the bathroom. To her family's amazement, her foot had straightened out and her leg had become perfectly normal. The cure caused a sensation—people from all over began to stream into the Sunga residence—relatives, friends, priests, religious and even total strangers came to see the child who had been healed by the water of Lipa. Some days afterwards, neighbors began to remark on the incredible fragrance of flowers that filled their surroundings, and the inhabitants of the Sunga household were stunned by a shower of petals that fell within their home.

Today, Melania Sunga is able to don footwear and walk about like any ordinary person. She is now with the Religious of the Assumption.

But apparently even prayers in front of the statue of the Mediatrix also produced wonders. In February 1949 the newspapers carried the story of Dominga Arellano, a 56-year-old crippled beggar, able to move about only on hands and knees, who claimed that after she had prayed before the Lady's image at Carmel, suddenly found that she could stand and walk.⁴²

But the impact of Lipa was not confined to the Philippines.

The petals found their way abroad, and accounts of cures in other countries poured into Carmel.⁴³

Many letters that I was asked to answer because of the, you know, they wrote to Carmel, and Ma Mere did not know English. So, being the eldest among the novices, we were two, it was Marie and I, I was entrusted to answer them. And really, there are many cures. Among these I remember the one in Madrid. Let's say, from the Dominican priests, then even London, even the States, many parts in the world.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F. J.

Forty three years later, those petals continue to circulate and reports of cures persist to this day.⁴⁴

Then the Virgin of Lipa went international. A replica of the Mediatrix was flown to Madrid, Spain, where she was borne in procession amidst crowds of enthusiastic devotees.

In August of 1949, the statue was brought to the United States by Dr. Genaro Vidal, cousin of Bishop Verzosa of Lipa, and as they disembarked at La Guardia airport in New York, the fragrance of roses reportedly swept over the

crowd who had burst through the guard lines and swarmed around the plane at the airfield. This was published in a national Catholic magazine and we quote:

The people on the field were so moved by this extraordinary experience that they could not be cleared from the runway for some time. The airline found it impossible to move the big four-engine transoceanic airplane. At last the crowd was persuaded to leave the area when the statue itself was carried into the baggage room. There they formed a cordon about the statue, standing on the baggage counter, and all said the rosary in unison for the next 15 minutes.⁴⁵

A few days later, the statue was triumphantly carried in procession on 2nd avenue of one of the most progressive cities of the world, by a crowd of more than 3000 New Yorkers.⁴⁶

Our Lady had hit the big time, so to speak. Mediatrix had made it to the Big Apple.

What then happened to Lipa? How is it that so extraordinary a phenomenon remains today only a vague memory in the minds of a few, and dismissed as a hoax by later generations?

Dispersal

Like most places where reports of the supernatural abound, Lipa was not spared from commercialism and the rush of opportunists anxious to cash in on the events. Restaurants and stalls selling all manner of religious items sprung up around the city. At the height of the showers, fake petal rackets mushroomed and such petals were supposedly on sale at the then staggering cost of P30 a piece. The Carmelite nuns also had to deal with unauthorized solicitations purportedly on their behalf.⁴⁷

Whether because of the rampant commercialism or some other aspect of the events, certain sectors of the Catholic church hierarchy were not pleased. Barely a year after the onset of the petal showers, Carmel Lipa suffered the first in a series of setbacks. On January 23, 1950, though he had not reached the mandatory age of retirement from office, Bishop Alfredo Verzosa was suddenly relieved of the administration of the diocese of Lipa. After 33 years of dedication, catechetical work, and active service, he remained bishop of Lipa in name only. Virtually all powers of one of the largest and richest dioceses of the Philippines was transferred into the hands of an apostolic administrator.

I was present when he was reading the letter that came from the Holy See. And the immediate reaction of the bishop was, we were all standing around him, he was sitting on his sofa and then he said, "This letter really came from the Holy Father?" He was saying it in Spanish.

Of course the two, Monsignor Santos and Monsignor Vagnozzi said, "Well, of course, you know, we came here to bring you, precisely to intimate it to you, to let you know."

And so he answered with, "If it came from the Holy Father and is written from the Holy Father, I have nothing to do but to bow my head and obey the Holy Father. But if this is not from the Holy Father. . ." He was alluding something might come from somebody, he said, "We will see." *

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

Talk was that Bishop Verzosa had been replaced because he had allowed public enthusiasm to grow around the phenomenon of Lipa. This is also confirmed by Bishop Pedernal:

Sometimes other bishops would say, "Why do you not be strong in prohibiting this?"

You know what the late bishop said? "Well, what power do I have? If this is really from Heaven, I cannot do anything. If the people are receiving special graces or whatever, if they are saying that they are receiving this, I cannot prevent them and that's why neither will I say 'no more'—too drastic a measure like that."

You see, this is what he said, "If this is of God, no human power can stop it."

*In reference to this, Bishop Pedernal recounts that years later, while attending a retreat in Baguio—the summer capital of the Philippines—the retreat master, famed Jesuit priest, Fr. Riccardo Lombardi, founder of what was then the well-known *Pro Mundo Migliori* (Better World Movement), recalled an audience he had had with Pius XII. During this conversation, the Holy Father reportedly asked Fr. Lombardi why he no longer heard or read anything about *Pro Mundo Migliori*. Aghast, Fr. Lombardi replied that he had dutifully obeyed the Holy Father's instruction and had stopped this movement two years earlier when he had received a letter from Pius XII informing him that his movement was banned. He then showed the Holy Father the letter he had received and then reported to his retreatants that the Holy Father looked at the letter and exclaimed, "But this is not my signature!"

But according to Fr. Juan Coronel, then Chancellor of the Diocese of Lipa, Verzosa was replaced because he had mismanaged the economic affairs of the diocese, and that his removal had nothing to do with the events at Lipa Carmel. Bishop Pedernal responded with:

They say that during all those years, of forty years of administration of Lipa, it seems that the diocese became bankrupt, no? But I know also personally that he became bankrupt and even his family—which was a very well to do family in Vigan—became bankrupt because he was spending. He was so good.

Extant documents at the chancery of the diocese at Lipa seem to buttress Pedernal's assessment of Verzosa's irreproachable character.

It was widely acclaimed that Monsignor Verzosa was a holy man. Certainly his spirituality was deep, so deep that he almost overlooked all material concerns. He practiced such a total forgetfulness of self that many times, the money that was due to him went to priests from poor parishes. And he gave away even the properties of the Church. Some parcels of land belonging to the Church were sold cheaply to people who begged for them. It was estimated that Monsignor Verzosa could have personally saved P300,000 yet he died penniless. He left behind his own sisters, who never left his side, without anything to live on. Before his death, when the holy bishop was sick and aging, he was relieved of the administration of the diocese. At this point, the diocese of Lipa was in need of someone who was more practical.

— ARCHDIOCESE OF LIPA QUINQUENNIAL REPORT,
1985–1989

Though Verzosa may have been thought a poor administrator, he excelled in the primary duty of his office, which was to bring more souls to the Faith. He focused on establishing catechetical centers and sending catechists throughout the far-flung corners of his diocese. Nevertheless, records show that prior to his relief, he was engaged in the reconstruction of the churches that had been leveled by

the war,⁴⁸ and that the first installment of the war damage claim was used to settle these debts and to finance the needs of various religious orders.⁴⁹

However, an intriguing statement was made by Fr. Senen Encarnacion, who, as Verzosa's nephew and one of the young priests of the diocese, was privy not only to what was going on in the parish, but was also the bishop's confidante. When he had heard that we were conducting an investigation into the events of 1948, he sent word that he was willing to be interviewed as he felt the need to reveal all he knew before he died:

I have been telling you there was a vested interest because they know, sooner or later, Bishop Verzosa was going to retire and there were people in Manila— of course priests and Monsignori— who were interested. . . . I'm telling you— it is a church of God, run by men.

It may never be known for certain what cost the bishop his seat—whether it was age, economic mismanagement, vested interests, or the fact that he had permitted public enthusiasm around Lipa to burgeon into a virtual national passion. He has since passed away, and surviving accounts and testimonies somehow seem to be in conflict.

Bishop Verzosa was replaced by Monsignor Rufino Santos, and it was under his authority that an official church commission was formed to investigate the apparitions at Lipa. As far as we know, all materials and documents in the Philippines have been burned or destroyed, and none can be found within the files of the Arzobispados of Lipa, Manila, and the nunciature. We know that a Carmelite Father was sent by the Generalate in Rome to conduct an investigation among the Carmelite nuns, and according to

our sources at the Vatican, this was due to a request sent by Monsignor Vagnozzi—then still just a papal delegate to the Philippines.

The Investigation

As far as can be determined, based upon the recollections of Teresing Castillo, other testimonies, and newspaper clippings of the time, the local commission was made up of: psychologist Fr. Angelo Blas, rector of the University of Santo Tomas; psychiatrist Dr. Leopoldo Pardo; Fr. Juan Ortega; Monsignor Artemio Casas; and Monsignor Santos.

When the investigation began, the distribution of petals was stopped, and the release of official statements from Carmel on the apparitions put to a halt.

The conduct of the investigation and its results, however, caused the congregation and the visionary much pain.

Mother Cecilia, the visionary's primary confidante, and reportedly also a recipient of interior locutions, soon shared the fate of the Bishop of Lipa. On February 27, 1950, she was suddenly, unexplainably replaced as prioress and mistress of Carmel.

The whole community was summoned to go to the choir, and so all of us went there. And then after, Monsignor Santos was in the middle and said, "You will have another prioress from now on. Here is Mother Mary of Christ and Sister Magdalene to be your mistress." But we can't say anything.

And then she addressed Mother Cecilia and said, "And you, Mother Cecilia, I'm giving you half an hour to pack your things and no more, no more than that." So she left.

— TERESITA CASTILLO

Mother Jacinta of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, another member of the community at the time, also remembers the abrupt replacement of their Prioress:

I did not see her go because we were all told to wait there in the choir and I did not know what happened, and I did not even know—ah yes, I knew, I knew that she was going because it was announced to us. But the way she left, I did not see.

Afterwards, we were told of the pitiful scene—that many of the sisters were stunned by the vehemence of the declaration and broke out into sobs while others were quietly crying in corners.

For Teresing, it was a painful parting:

When she left, *umiiyak ang mga madre* [the nuns were crying]. *Ako, hindi ako makaiyak* [I could not cry]. I don't know why, but I was full. I was really full, "What's next—why?" I was full inside, thinking, "*Bakit kaya* [what could be the reason], did Mother Cecilia do anything wrong or something?"

Hindi ako napaiyak talaga [I really could not cry]. I just prayed. But others, *umiiyak* [but the others were crying]. And then when I was in the choir for meditation, there, that was the time I started to cry.

... But then, I can see that the sisters were a little bit, *yon bang kabado* [they were probably nervous], something like that—*umiiyak, malimit umiiyak, ganoon* [they often burst into tears]. And then I did not know until later *naito palang si* [that] Mother Cecilia was brought to Jaro,⁵⁰ Carmel. They said it was for investigation also.

But it was not only Teresing who felt the pain of Mother Cecilia's going. Fighting back her tears, Sister Elizabeth recounts:

My first suffering was that when our Mother was taken, and we did not know where she would stay. And she just left us. . . . And then, secondly, of course we know Mother Mary of Christ by name, but we do not really know her personally. And of course, that was a big pain for each and every one of us.

In the meantime, the sudden re-assignment of Mother Mary Anne Cuna, subprioress and infirmarian of Lipa, caused her family considerable consternation.

Nawala siya. Kung minsan, may panahon na hindi namin nalaman kung saan siya nandodoon. Tinatanong namin kung nasaan, hindi raw nila alam, sabi ng mga Carmelite.

[She disappeared. There was a time we didn't know where she was. We were asking where she was but the Carmelite nuns didn't know.]

— LUTGARDA CUNA MENDOZA

She was told to ask then papal delegate, Monsignor Egidio Vagnozzi, regarding the whereabouts of her sister.

Pumunta naman ako sa kanya, no. Umiiyak ako, sabi ko, "Monsignor," sabi kong ganoon, "Gusto ko lang malaman kung nasaan yung kapatid ko, si Mother Mary Anne."

Ngayon, sabi niya, "Sasabihin ko na lang sa iyo kung kailan mo siya puwedeng makita."

[I went to him. I was crying. I said, "Monsignor, I just want to know where my sister Mother Mary Anne is."

He said, "I will just inform you when you can see her."]

— LUTGARDA CUNA MENDOZA

Bishop Obviar

Perhaps the second most important witness to the occurrences at Lipa was Bishop Obviar. As auxiliary bishop of Lipa and chaplain of Carmel, he had closely monitored all the developments, had allowed the nuns to commission a statue, approved the release of the apparition story and messages to the public, and had even blessed the groundbreaking and foundation of the new Carmelite chapel.

Obviar was also relieved of his position. He stayed on in Lipa at the family residence in a sort of limbo, so to speak, and only after a year, was assigned to the Diocese of Lucena, demoted to the rank of apostolic administrator.

So we, we were like that until the time that the investigators came over, and so we were investigated one by one.

— TERESING CASTILLO

There are no records of when this investigation at Carmel took place. Teresing remembers being questioned by Msgr. Artemio Casas and Fr. Juan Ortega; Sister Elizabeth and Mother Mary of the Immaculate Heart also remember being questioned, but others claim they were not.

I was never questioned.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

No, never. Never.

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

Teresing tries to explain the reason for the resultant confusion at the time:

Maybe if it happened these days, it would have been very much easier because you can ask questions now, even from the prioress you can ask, you can have a dialogue. But that time? You cannot. So we remained in doubt all the time, hanging in the air, not knowing what the next step will be.

In one meeting of the novices, we were talking about that and said, "*Yon pala* [it turns out], even Mother Prioress can be picked up like that, how much more us?" So all of us were really scared.

"*E hindi na kayo, ako na ang susunod,*" *sabi ko naman* ["I will be next, not you," I said], "Because see, I am the one connected with this case."

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Interrogation

Teresing was right. Soon afterwards, the postulant was picked up by Monsignor Santos and, chaperoned by Sister Stephanie of the Cross, brought to the hospital of the University of Santo Tomas (UST) in Manila:

"Bakit, may sakit ba ako? [Why, am I sick?]" I wanted to ask him, *"Bakit ako dinala dito, may sakit baga ako? [Why was I brought here? Am I sick?]"* *Ganoon* [It was like that], no. But as usual, mortification of the tongue, you see, because they say that when you mortify interior feelings like that, it is better than any external instrument of penance. So I did, I kept my mouth shut.

— TERESING CASTILLO

Fr. Blas

Teresing was subsequently interrogated at UST by psychologist, Fr. Angelo Blas, and a noted psychiatrist, Dr. Leopoldo Pardo. Fr. Blas was the first to question her.

And he started asking me, "Do you have a tendency in the family, do you have a tendency *na*, or do you have a member of your family who became insane?"

I said, "Not that I know of, Father," I said.

"Or any sickness, say, of the head, of the nerves, something like that?"

I said, "Well, headaches, yes Father," I said, "But other diseases, I don't know."

— TERESING CASTILLO

The accusation of a lesbian relationship with Mother Cecilia also resurfaced:

Three hours, he was pounding on me for three hours. I was quiet but I was firm with my, my statements. So he took one piece of paper and then he gave it to me. "Now sign that," he said.

So, "Ay, Father, I will have to read it first." So I read it and it said there that everything is a hoax, fraud, and all my imagination because I just want to be popular, and to be loved, like that. And so I did not sign. "Father," I said, "I'm sorry. I cannot sign this." He said, "Why?"

"Because what you, what you have written here, Father, it's not true." *Sabi ko* [I said], "What I am telling you is true, but what you are telling me here is not true, so how do you expect me, Father, please." I said, "I cannot, really."

Then he got mad with me and he stood up. *Mayroong ash tray diyan* [there was an ashtray there], and he took hold of the ash tray and *sabi ko*, "*Katapat ko lang, ibabato yata 'to sa akin*" [I said to myself, "It was just in front of me, he's going to throw it at me"]. I was just thinking that. He was holding it and he had no cigarettes *naman*, so "*Ibabato yata 'to sa akin* [he's going to throw this at me]," I was telling myself.

So when he stood up, I changed my, I left my place, and I, I went a little bit towards the right side, *ay*, left side. Sure enough, the, the ash tray flew. And so I started to shake. My knees were shaking *talaga* [really], *oo*. I felt that I was pale and my knees started to, to give way.

And he said, "Why don't you like to sign?" I said, "Father, I cannot really sign."

"How about — " I said, "Kindly tell Arch, ah, Monsignor Santos to kindly come here because I need him."

So, pacing *siya, ganyan, nakaganoon yong kamay* [he was pacing the room, his hands were in this position] (illustrates by putting her hands on her waist), and then he said, "You know," he said, "Do you know that even Carmelites can imagine things?"

I said, "Yes, Father."

"Then do you know that members of Carmelite contemplative orders have more tendency to imagine things than active orders?"

I did not say anything to him, and so when we were like that, "Father," I said, "I'm not feeling well because I felt I was going to faint. I said, (her voice breaks; her eyes begin to tear) "I'm not feeling well, Father," *sinabi ko talaga* [I really told him]. So, (nervous laughter, covers her mouth in embarrassment, then breaks down, removes her glasses, wipes her eyes with trembling hands) I told him, "Father, I'm not telling a lie." I told him that. "If you want to punish me, you can send me out if you like, but I'm not telling a lie," I told him that.

E, *siguro* [maybe] he did not, he did not believe. So he left me. I was asking for blessing, he did not bless me. And so I told Sister Stephanie, "*Sige na* [go ahead], you call *nga* Monsignor Santos," because I was really crying *na*, and Monsignor Santos came the following day and I was crying and so I told him, and "He will be back yet," he said. I said, "*Naku, ayoko na ho,*" *sabi ko*. ["Please, I don't want this anymore," I said.] *Sabi ko'y* [I said] it's not, it's not *naman* prudent because he asked me to sign something that, that's not true and I really told him, "I swear before God, I'm not telling a lie," I said.

Sabi niya [he said], "It has to be, it has to be, *hija* [daughter]." (referring to the fact that she would have to be re-interrogated by Fr. Blas)

Yon naman si [that] Dr. Pardo, he wanted me to tell him that I was under strain because of my brother and then, then my family, and then that was the one that triggered off these, all these things. That was what he wanted me to do. *Ako naman* [But I], I said, "*Hindi naman, hindi naman, doktor* [no, no, doctor], it is not like that, I don't think so."

But he said, "Do you know what will happen to you when you entered Carmel?"

"No," I said. "No. If I knew *nga sana di* [then] I will not enter anymore."

Dr. Pardo and Fr. Blas are both dead. There are no documents to prove that they had resorted to intimidation, or that they had presented Teresing with a false document to sign. And as far as can be deduced, there were no other witnesses to the questioning.

In all probability, if Teresing's testimony is to be believed, and taking into consideration testimonies of those who knew their character, both these men—in their attempts to arrive at the truth—had no recourse but to resort to playing devil's advocate.

Fr. Pablo Fernandez, O.P. has this to say of Fr. Blas, his brother Dominican:

He was very simple in his ways and very old, and as a religious, he was behaving well, very noticeable. As a matter of fact, he was the brightest Dominican in the Philippines during that time, and a very good psychologist and philosopher. And of course, he was also good in theology. But I don't think that he was an authority to pass judgment on these supernatural matters.

He recalls having once observed Fr. Blas questioning a blind girl who was reported to have had mystical experiences, and disagreed as to the effectivity of the psychologist's manner of questioning:

My impression was this: in order to pass judgment on the mystical phenomena that are reported about that girl, we have to examine her slowly, carefully, repeatedly, and gain her confidence so she will speak sincerely and openly, e? Perhaps, Fr. Blas may have been a little rough about this matter or this approach.

Yet despite the manner in which Fr. Blas may have conducted his investigation, Bishop Godofredo Pedernal recounts that the psychologist had been impressed with Teresita:

This is what I heard from him, that to his surprise, her intellectual capacity and educational attainment it seems would not have been sufficient to answer his questions as a professional psychologist. But he was surprised that she could answer very calmly and correctly.

Bishop Pedernal's statement is supported by a publication that later reported that Father Blas affirmed Teresita's sanity and stability:

The UST rector, who is a psychologist, talked to Teresita Castillo, postulant at the Carmelite Monastery in Lipa City, who claimed to have seen the Blessed Virgin in the garden of the monastery and with whom she had an appointment for 15 days. Fr. Blas believes she is perfectly normal and is not suffering from hallucinations.⁵¹

If Fr. Blas did submit a report stating that the novice Teresita Castillo was sane, and not given to imagination and hysteria, what then are we to make of her testimony on the appearance of Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace? On what grounds did the investigative committee refute the supernatural character of the events of Lipa?

Reunion and Exile

In the course of the interrogations at UST, the so-called supernatural manifestations surrounding Teresing recurred. Sister Stephanie of the Cross, who had previously witnessed other phenomena, was not surprised:

Noong isang hapon [one afternoon], di during meditation, nasa UST kami, nakita ko uneasy [we were at UST, and I saw that she was uneasy]. Nakahiga pero bumangon, lumakad, ganyan. Paganyan-ganyan sa, paikot-ikot sa kama. [She was lying down but she got up and kept walking around her bed.]

Andoon siya, nandito ako, nandito ang altar namin, yung iron chair, nandiyon. Biglang-biglang, para ba yung hinawakan at hinampas mo sa floor. Ang gulat ko, kung anong nakita ko, iyon. [She was there, I was here, our altar was here, the iron chair was there. Suddenly, it was as if someone took hold of the chair and threw it on the floor. Startled, I turned and saw it.]

... Sabi ko, "Sister, bakit?" Di, nakita ko siya na maputlang-maputla naman. Takbo agad ako. Di pagkaganoon, ano na eh, di hinawakan ko at inihiga ko sa kama. "Sister, bakit?" [Then I asked, "Sister, why?" Then I saw that she had turned deathly pale. So I rushed to her, I held her, and made her lie down on the bed. I asked her, "Sister, why?"]

"Whenever I meditate on our Blessed Virgin, he appears, that big, big, black man," *sabing ganoon, e* [she replied]. *Siguro, nabunggo yung chair.* [He had probably hit the chair.]

She saw further evidence of what Teresing claimed was diabolical harassment:

Yung isang umaga, nag-ano kami, nagsimba. Pagdating namin sa room, nang alisin yung habit, yun lang parang gown niya at saka petticoat, ganyan. Sabi, "Sister, punta lang ako sa toilet." Sabi ko, "Oo."

Sa kalkula ko, hindi pa nakarating sa loob, sa loob ng toilet, lumabas agad. Naka-, tumindig sa pinto, sabi, "Sister," sabing ganoon. Nang makita, tinuro sa akin yung tali ng petticoat niya. Naglilingas yung dalawang dulo. Naku, di ginanyan ko agad. Tapos, inipon ko yung abo.

Yun nga daw, paikot-ikot daw yung devil, yung 'big black man' na iyon. Nahawakan yung nakalawit na string ng petticoat.

[One morning, we went to Mass. When we returned to the room, she removed her habit, leaving just her gown and her petticoat on. She said, "I'm going to the toilet. "

She had barely entered the toilet when she suddenly rushed out. She stood by the door saying, "Sister." She pointed to the strings of her petticoat. Both ends were on fire! So I quickly extinguished the flames. Then I gathered the ashes.

According to her, he kept circling the room, that devil, that "big black man". He had grasped the dangling strings of her petticoat.]

The Prioress

It was also at UST that Teresing again came in contact with Mother Cecilia.

Monsignor Santos, who visited Teresing in between her harrowing interrogations, comforted and even fed her when she was too tense to eat, asked if she would like to see the prioress again. Teresing replied:

I said, "*Hindi na ho. Malayo naman ang Jaro.*" ["No, it's all right. Jaro is too far."] *Para, siguro*, to console me *kasi nga iyak ako ng iyak*, to console me *naman siguro*, [perhaps he said it to console me because I kept crying] he offered. "*Hindi naman, ang layo naman ng Jaro.*" ["No, it's all right. Jaro is too far."]

Sabi niya, "Hindi, malapit lang." [He said, "No, she's close by."]

"*Siya nga?* [Really?] Is she sick?"

"*Hindi* [no], she's just near you."

"Oh, yes, of course," I said. "I want to see her."

So he brought me to the next room. *Yon pala naman* [It turned out], Mother Cecilia was already there for ten days *din* [also]. See, just next to my room.

Di, I went inside and I saw her sitting on the bed facing the wall. And so Bishop Santos said, "O, Mother, *andito ho si* Sister Teresita." *Tinanong ko sa kanya* ["Mother, Sister Teresita is here." I asked her] if she wants to see you and so, *eto, eto siya*. [and she said yes, so here she is]" *Ganyan* [like that].

Di I kissed her—*walang* response [there was no response]. So, "Mother," I said, "I am here." Maybe she got a shock or what, I do not—. "Mother," I said, "*Nandito na ako,*" *sabi kong ganoon*. "*Kaya nga mag-usap tayong dalawa,*" ["I am already here," I said. "Let us talk, the two of us"] I was telling her that way. *Walang* response. [No response.] So, Cardinal Santos left us. *Sabi niya, baka, baka si* Mother, *kaya ganoon*, [he said that perhaps Mother is acting that way] because he is present. So, he left us and he told us, "I'll give you half an hour, thirty minutes to chat."

I sat beside her and then I embraced her—no response. “So, Mother,” I said, “*Naku naman*. It’s good *nanga*. I’m very happy that I saw you, *yon pala* [as it turns out], you are *pala* here in UST.” *Wala ring* response. [Still no response.]

Then finally I said, “*Ala, alis na lang ako* [I will just go], I’ll go because you might be tense because I’m here. Anyway, I cannot talk to you. You don’t like to talk to me so I will, I will go,” I told Mother Cecilia. “Now, if during our time, when I was there during your being prioress, Mother,” I said, “If I had given you headaches or if I have done something wrong, *ngayon* [now], I’m asking you pardon and forgiveness,” I said. “So, I will go.”

And when I said that, then she started to cry and she embraced me tightly and she started to cry. (eyes begin to tear)

I said, “*Sige, iyak na kayo*. [Go ahead and cry.] It’s better if you cry,” I said. “It’s always better.”

And then she told me, “You know, you have, you tell the sisters to pray very, very much for me because *hirap na hirap na hirap na ako*,” *sabi niya*. [“I’m suffering very much,” she said.] “You know, I am not even allowed to join the community acts, the office, anything.” She was always *daw* in the infirmary.

I said, “Mother, why did you not ask them if you can join?”

“No, I’m not allowed, I’m not allowed, Teresita,” *sabi niya* [she said]. “That is why you have to pray very much for me and tell the sisters to pray very, very much for me.”

“So, yes, Mother,” I said.

“Now, I only want to tell you one thing,” she said. “If you still consider me as your Mother Prioress, I forbid you to use any instrument of penance that you used to ask from me, because you have to preserve your health because of Mama Mary’s case. That is not only our cause but it is purely Mama Mary’s cause.”

Dumating na si Monsignor Santos, [Monsignor Santos returned] and he saw both of us were crying. "O sige, Mother, I will take Sister Teresita to her room."

So I kissed her, no, and then I knelt and *yong mga prioress sa night time, ginaganyan-ganyan ako*. [Then, as all prioresses do at night, she made the sign of the cross on my forehead.] (makes the sign of the cross on her forehead) "Alright, Mother, we'll be very very united with our prayers, sacrifices and everything," I said.

The next day, Teresing was scheduled to return to Lipa and asked Monsignor Santos if she could say goodbye to Mother Cecilia. But she was told that the prioress was no longer there. She had already been taken to the airport.

Sister Bernadette of the Mother of God, one time official chronicler of the Lipa community, sheds some light on what may have transpired in UST. The former Infirmarian, Mother Mary Ann Cuna, O.C.D., had been banished to Laoag and suffered the same fate as Mother Cecilia:

Mother Mary Ann told me that she was brought to UST and there she met Mother Mary Cecilia, and there, they were questioned by Fr. Blas about the, about the events of Lipa. And according to her, they were accused by a former sister in Lipa, I think a novice, but she didn't mention the name.

Mother Cecilia would continue to suffer from the ignominy of her banishment from Lipa. Sister Bernadette Castillo of the Carmelite Community of Jaro was there:

I could sense and I could feel within myself that she is suffering interiorly.

Her testimony and that of the other members of the Carmelite convent in Jaro, Iloilo substantiate Teresing's account of Mother Cecilia's anguish:

When she came to Carmel, she was still not so, not so thin, but after awhile, after some time, she became very thin and emaciated because she, she eats very little. She was not coming along with us during community acts. After our meals, she goes out, and then afterwards she just retires to her room in the infirmary.

— SISTER BERNADETTE CASTILLO, O.C.D.

Besides being barred from the recitation of the divine office and participation in community acts, there were reports that the prioress was reduced to the status of that of a scullery maid at Jaro, Carmel.

- Fr. Coronel: Well, when she left this Carmel (referring to Lipa Carmel), I went to visit her in Iloilo.
- JK: What was it like?
- Fr. Coronel: I just consoled her. She was . . . I knew she was very unhappy so she needed some consolation.
- JK: I was told she was put to work in the kitchen?
- Fr. Coronel: Uh, those things.
- JK: And she was not allowed to recite the divine office?
- Fr. Coronel: They're the least . . . Those things are not the most painful.
- JK: Yes. Even the reciting of the divine office being taken away from her is not as painful?
- Fr. Coronel: It wasn't. Being taken from the place where she knew all those things happen. She was the number one witness.

I knew her before I entered Carmel. . . . She was a person so, so alive, full of life and always joyful. But when she came here, there was no more life in her.

— SISTER BERNADETTE CASTILLO, O.C.D.

And yet, despite these rather severe deprivations and her apparent distress, the Carmelite nuns would remember that Mother Cecilia never showed any signs of bitterness or anger.

Our interviews with the Carmelite community of Jaro revealed that they, too, were witness to strange and unexpected events. Sister Mary Tayamora—the first Filipina to enter Carmel and now 82 years old, keenly remembers that period in their community life. Too shy to appear on camera, she nevertheless testified, with her superiors as witnesses, that on many an early morning, she would see Mother Cecilia in the kitchen burning little pieces of paper; and one afternoon, she and some other nuns were present when a shower of petals fell within the confines of the infirmary. The sisters had excitedly gathered up the petals, but the former prioress maintained her composure, and when pressed for a reaction, quietly said, “I feel so happy, because our Blessed Mother is still following me.”

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Verdict

Apart from what looked like a deliberate dispersal of the main witnesses and advocates of Lipa, and the intimidation and coercion reportedly used by interrogators on the visionary and the other nuns, there are indications that the official church investigation was a rather hurried, slipshod affair, generally wanting in thoroughness.

Bishop Verzosa, for instance, was never questioned, and more importantly, neither was Bishop Obviar, who would till his dying day, wait for official church representatives to come for his testimony.

Francisco Dychangco, head of the Lipa Marian Research Center, which at one time spearheaded a campaign that tried to have the case re-opened, cites yet another serious oversight on the part of the commission:

For example, Mrs. Mendoza of Paco, and also Sister Melania Sunga of Candon, Ilocos Sur. And I asked them if they were investigated, if these miracles were investigated, and they said never. So I presumed that those who investigated Lipa only asked questions from the Sisters and never investigated any of the miracles.

In April of 1951, only two and a half years after the reported apparitions, the Philippine hierarchy pronounced its verdict: *there was no supernatural intervention in the events that occurred at Carmel of Lipa*. The decision was signed by six bishops: Gabriel M. Reyes, then Archbishop of Manila; Cesar M. Guerrero, Bishop of San Fernando; Mariano Madriaga, Bishop of Lingayen; Juan C. Sison, Auxiliary Bishop of Nueva Segovia; Vicente P. Reyes, Auxiliary Bishop of Manila; and surprisingly, Rufino Santos, Apostolic Administrator of Lipa.⁵²

All of these bishops have since passed away. But there are testimonies to the effect that they may have been ill prepared to sign such a document. We now quote from our interview with Mr. Dychangco:

JK: Did you ever get to talk to any of them?

Dychangco: Yes. Only one, because at that time in 1982, only one was living, and that was Bishop Reyes of Cabanatuan, Vicente Reyes. And I asked him, "How did you arrive at that decision?"

He told me, "I was a young bishop then. I was called to the Arzobispado in Intramuros at nine o'clock in the morning. We had a conference there. At around three o'clock, we signed the document that it was not true."

I asked him, "Did you investigate yourself, Your Excellency?"

"No," he said. "There was a body, a commission who investigated."

Teresing states that she was never called to face or be interrogated by the Bishops. Neither was she ever interrogated by the Carmelite father sent from Rome.

Dychangco discloses that there are also some indications of coercion:

At least one bishop there confessed that he was forced to sign.

Mother Mary Margaret of the Sacred Heart, former prioress of Angeles Carmel, now deceased, revealed that Bishop Guerrero often expressed his disappointment over the turn of events:

He did not make much statement about it because it was forbidden by the Church. But then we knew from his talks, privately, that he was in, I mean, he approved that happening in Lipa. He found it supernatural.

— MOTHER MARY MARGARET OF THE SACRED HEART,
O.C.D.

Bishop Cesar Guerrero used to come here every year on the 21st of November. He used to come here to pay his respect to our Blessed Mother. And he says Mass. After saying Mass, he used to see the community.

I was then a very young novice, and I remember in one of his visits he said that, "You know, I am really waiting for the church approval of the apparitions of Our Lady." I saw tears in his eyes.

— SISTER BERNADETTE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, O.C.D.

He informed us that every November 21st, he will come here. *Alam mo* [you know], by November, *ay*, it's still dark, so we do not open the gate until *mga* [around] five-thirty, quarter to six, like that. But during that time, when he was still living, we used to open even before five. Because coming from Pampanga, he would just appear. Then *nagpapark yung kanyang kotse doon sa harapan ng aming simbahan* [he would park his car in front of our church]. And then he told us also, "You know, I tell our Blessed Mother, 'Mama Mary, I am here to present myself.'"

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Jesuit priest Fr. Lorenzo Maria Guerrero, who headed the Apostleship of Prayer for 29 years, and then went on to head the Marian Movement of Priests in the Philippines, disclosed that his uncle, Bishop Cesar Guerrero, revealed as he lay dying that he had been forced into signing the final verdict on Lipa. Moreover, Bishop Guerrero stated that he believed in the veracity of the apparitions. Fr. Guerrero has since suffered a debilitating stroke, but in his desire to set the record straight, has signed his official testimony to this effect.⁵³

JK: Fr. Guerrero, is this your signature? (referring to document found in Appendix C)

Fr. Guerrero: Yes, yes.

JK: Do you attest to the authenticity and veracity of this account?

Fr. Guerrero: Yes, very much.

JK: To the best of your knowledge, was this your uncle's deathbed confession?

Fr. Guerrero: Yes.

Bishop Pedernal also disclosed some interesting information:

Bishop Guerrero was already living in Hospicio de San Jose and once in a while, Bishop Obviar would go there to visit him. And he always talked about (holds up imaginary petal) the petal.

The same thing with all the other ones who signed like Archbishop Juan Sison of Vigan. It's the same thing with Sison—all these bishops who have signed—they never did away with the petal that they got, that the sisters gave them. (suppresses a chuckle)

Mother Therese of the Holy Face, H.F.J., recounted during our interview that Bishop Guerrero made a rather enigmatic revelation:

Mother Therese: I was transferred in 1956 to Angeles Carmel as Subprioress. Now, every now and then, when he became the bishop of San Fernando, he used to visit us.

And one day, when he was talking to us, we were talking about Lipa and he said, "I always go there every November 21. Someday the truth will come out."

JK: He said that? Did he ever indicate that he believed that it would be—

Mother Therese: Not exactly, but as he was explaining what happened, I don't know if I should tell it—

JK *Sige na!* [Go ahead!]

Mother Therese: *Sabi niya* [he said], "It's the fault of that man!" . . . He did not mention the name. I don't know, he did not tell the name.

A reliable source (which we cannot disclose in the interest of prudence) testifies that Bishop Patrick Shanley of Isabela was reportedly so disgusted by the conduct of the investigation and the manner in which certain church officials influenced the outcome of the verdict. In a fit of anger, he denounced the proceedings and revealed that the bishops had been forced to sign the verdict by the papal nuncio upon the pain of excommunication.

As part of our research, we asked people who knew the late papal nuncio about their impressions of him:

JK: What kind of a man was Monsignor Vagnozzi?

Fr. Fernandez: Well, he was a handsome man, strong-willed.

He was a very intelligent person, very well-prepared. . . . He was a workaholic. . . . He took very little time off for vacation and relaxation. He also was rather intolerant sometimes of mistakes. He always wanted results, and in the process, sometimes he became a little rough.

— FR. ESPINAS
FORMER PRIVATE SECRETARY TO MSGR. VAGNOZZI

He became one of the most influential cardinals we ever had . . . He's very impulsive, you know. That's why he had many friends in the Philippines but he also had so many enemies, I would say. (chuckles)

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

Bishop Pedernal adds that Vagnozzi did not believe the reported apparitions at Lipa to be authentic:

He said that it was kind of a co—, in Spanish you say, *parang imbento, ano? Yung* [it was an] invention of the sisters.

If he had indeed threatened the Philippine hierarchy with excommunication, as some testimonies indicate, did Vagnozzi overstep the bounds of his authority? For a papal legate functions as an ambassador; his duties are normally that of liaison between the Vatican and the Philippine government and hierarchy.

The nuncio has no—when it comes to jurisdiction, the nuncio has no jurisdiction whatsoever to any bishop. Because that's, as you know, I hope you know that the set-up of the Catholic Church is, every bishop in his diocese is only responsible

directly to the pope, not to the nuncio. A bishop for example of San Pablo, is not responsible to Cardinal Sin even if he's the Archbishop, but it's only to the Holy Father, direct to the Holy Father.

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

I think he should not have interfered with the matter of the petals. That should have been done by the Philippine hierarchy, by the bishops.

— FR. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

And when asked whether it was possible that some of the bishops would have signed the pronouncement because they were intimidated, Fr. Fernandez had this to say:

It is possible, yes, it is possible that a white man in those times had a superiority, either real or supposed over the Filipinos because you were still close to the times of colonialism.

Bishop Pedernal, however, indicates that the considerable influence of Monsignor Rufino Santos cannot be discounted:

Bishop Obviar, he was a good friend of Bishop Guerrero and he said, "Why did you sign that? I know that you believe it, you always have your petal there." And the late Bishop Guerrero said, "I had to sign because the Cardinal (referring to Monsignor Santos) said we all had to sign this."

Fr. Espinas, on the other hand, had this to say:

But I want to make known one thing. It was not Vagnozzi who decided the whole thing. The director general of the Carmelite order was the one who investigated the whole thing. He stayed in Manila for as much as a month or two months. And he was at the Lipa monastery everyday. And he used to go to the nunciature and make his progressive report. And on that progressive report, he made a progressive report to Rome.

See, it was Fr. Michael, I think his name was Fr. Michael, who did all the investigations. . . . So it was Fr. Michael whose decision was the main factor that made the decision. It was not Vagnozzi.

In the course of our investigation, we discovered that there were documents on Lipa still in existence in the archives of the Carmelite Generalate in Rome. Armed with a letter from Archbishop Mariano Gaviola of Lipa, I went to Rome with the hopes that these documents would be able to shed some light on the manner of the investigation and the reason for the verdict. Strangely enough, there was very little on file on the case of Lipa. There weren't any records of who had been sent, why, and for how long. More importantly, there wasn't even an official report from Fr. Michael Moylan on the nature of his investigation or the reason for the negative decision on Lipa.

However, I did find two thought-provoking documents. One was a letter, dated 1949, by then Archbishop O'Doherty of Manila. It was apparently in reply to a letter from Mother Cecilia and we quote:

I can assure you very sincerely that I have never, as you say, disowned my children from Manila who have flown to Lipa, and I have continued to offer my Masses and prayers for you, as for all those that I appreciate. And hence, for this reason, *I send you my blessing with all the unction of my heart, trusting that you will be able to perform miracles for the spiritual regeneration of the people that fall within the sphere of your personal influence and your prayers.* (emphasis ours)

The next document was even more curious. Dated September 26, 1962 (Protocol Number 220/49), it was written by Cardinal Ottaviani in reply to a letter concerning the status of Mother Cecilia and Mother Mary Anne. It was addressed to the Most Reverend Father Anactacio of the Most Holy Rosary, Prior General of the Discalced Carmelites.

Your Most Reverend Father sent to this Supreme Sacred Congregation a letter from the Prioress of the Carmelite Convent of Quezon City (Philippines), which inquired whether the Sisters, Mother Mary Cecilia and Mother Mary Anne of Jesus ought to remain temporarily or permanently in the said Convent. At the same time, the same Prioress asked whether the Convent of Lipa would be prevented from holding the canonical elections.

In relation to this, I wish to communicate to You that from this Holy Office, we gather that on the 19th of February 1953, the then Apostolic Delegate, Monsignor Vagnozzi, had been authorized to admit candidates to the novitiate and to simple or solemn profession in accordance with the norms of the Code of Canon Law and of the particular Constitutions of Carmel, provided that *they be informed of the judgment and the decisions made about the happenings in Lipa* (emphasis ours).

In this particular case, then, and with the letter of this Supreme Sacred Congregation dated 29 December 1959, it has been communicated to Your Reverence that the abovementioned Sisters implicated in the presumed extraordinary happenings at Lipa be rehabilitated in their position as Choir members, but permanently deprived of both active and passive voice.

Inasmuch as there exist no other data in the Archives of the Holy Office (emphasis ours), Your Reverence can consult the Sacred Congregation for the Religious for whatever future official decisions.⁵⁴

This is curious because it was Cardinal Ottaviani who for 50 years, as head of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, was responsible for all decisions relating to the matter of apparitions and private revelations. If there was "no other data in existence in the Archives of the Holy Office," where could they be? The question then is, had the case of Lipa been merely decided on at the local level? Could it be that it had never been officially elevated to the investigation of the Holy See?

The last line of Ottaviani's second paragraph seems to indicate as much.

Bishop Pedernal believes that the decision was prematurely arrived at and points out that official church investigations into reported apparitions throughout the history of the church normally last several years.

Apparently, many members of the Church Hierarchy believed in the apparitions of Mary at Lipa, but had unfortunately kept their silence. Bishop Pedernal relates the very interesting account of Monsignor Morelli, Charges d' Affairs of the Holy See to the Philippines prior to the appointment of Monsignor Vagnozzi. Pedernal had accompanied Bishop Obviar on his visit to Rome, and had been present at the meeting between Morelli and Obviar:

Morelli started about the state of Lipa. He said, "Bishop Obviar, why did the bishops in the Philippines not insist in asking the Holy Father to approve that the Virgin Mother, Blessed Mother, had gone to the Philippines, to Lipa? Because I myself, personally, before I left the Philippines, twice I experienced in Lipa what had happened in Fatima about the sun while I was there in Carmel."

And Bishop Obviar, you know, *lumabas ang kanyang pagka-Batangueño* [the typical temperament of a man from Batangas emerged]. He said, speaking, they were talking in Spanish, he said: "*Tontería!*" he said. "How is this possible? You were one of those who signed this thing about the petals and about that foolishness!"

And the poor monsignor, "You know at that time, I was not a bishop. But you see," he was insisting that, "I am only a retired Monsignor."

In fact, Bishop Obviar still said, "You are here at the, at the point of the nose of the Holy Father, so you tell the Holy Father, you approve that the Blessed Mother went to the Philippines, there in Lipa."

He said, "What can I, I cannot do that, I am nothing here. I am only praying as an old retired Monsignor, *canonigo*. But I say you bishops in the Philippines, you have more influence and power to tell the Holy Father, please declare that the Blessed Mother. . ."

And so the Bishop afterwards, he was explaining, saying, "You say that when you were there, you said you signed that document that there was nothing. Now here you are, you're telling me now that you believe that the Blessed Mother went there!"

Then I joked Bishop Obviar, saying, "*Tama na ho, huwag niyo na ho pagalitan, baka hindi tayo pakainin, no?*" ["That is enough, please do not get angry. He may not feed us anymore."] So during the lunch and before we left, again, Monsignor Morelli, he pulled out from his pocket, "Monsignor, this petal which I got from Lipa during the shower will not be—I will never separate from this petal until I die."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Clamp-Down

After the church decision was released, the nuns were instructed to destroy all materials connected with the apparitions.

I think it was one week that we were burning and burning. . . Leaflets, books, novenas, everything! There were piles and piles and boxes and boxes. We had to burn all of that.

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

Sinunog yong diary ko, e, pati diary ni Mother Cecilia. Sinunog nila labat. [They burned my diary, as well as the diary of Mother Cecilia. They burned them all.]

— TERESING CASTILLO

We began burning, and after about a week or less than a week, Mother Jacinta got sick. And after that, the whole community helped in crumpling the papers first. . . . It extended to about a month in all.

— MOTHER MARY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART, O.C.D.

We as extern sisters, we had to burn our own. . . pictures *atsaka yung* [and the] petals. . . . Petals and pictures. . . . *Wala* [no more]. . . . Not a lot, but a good number. *At saka yung* [and her] pictures *niya*. (suppresses tears) . . . *Oo* [yes], of our Blessed Mother.

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Even the convent at Jaro, Iloilo wasn't spared. Unfortunately, a young nun had excitedly showed her precious petal to one of the Carmelite investigators sent by the Generalate in Rome. And soon afterwards, Sister Mary Tayamora was ordered to burn all petals and material connected with the apparitions at Lipa. She states that as she did so, a gigantic blue flame issued from the small pyre, expanded to the height of four feet, and lingered until everything was consumed.

The statue of the Mediatrix was also ordered destroyed, but the nuns couldn't bring themselves to do so, and devised ways and means to save it:

The statue, we did not burn it. . . . But they put a heart at the center to make it look like the Immaculate Heart, and they painted it blue.

— MOTHER MARY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART, O.C.D.

It was kept and then it was in a corner. And then it was covered with cloth. . . . There was a time when it was exposed in one of the rooms. And then afterwards, I think, when Monsignor Santos or somebody else came and said, "Do not do that," so, it was kept again.

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

Strict silence was imposed on the sisters of Carmel: they were never to speak of the apparitions again. To reinforce this order, they were told that if they spoke about it amongst themselves, they would be guilty of a venial sin, and discussing it with outsiders would constitute a mortal sin and possible excommunication. As shocking as this may seem to us now, one has to remember that this occurred in pre-Vatican II times; much has changed since then.

In fact, our superior from Rome came to us and told about it, not to speak about it anymore. Even Monsignor Reyes, the one who died, he told us, he brought us to the choir and then someone announced it is forbidden to speak about that Lady of Lipa. So we kept quiet about it.

— SISTER MARY MARGARET OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

By declaring an absence of supernatural intervention in the events at Lipa, the Church had, in effect, implied that the entire affair was a hoax, and thus brought down upon Carmel a deluge of public detraction. But among the thousands of devotees, there was shock, pain, disbelief, and anger:

I didn't believe them. . . . Even if the people will not believe, I believe!

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

I remember being deeply hurt by all this talk.

— FELIX BAUTISTA JR.

I could not, I could not accept that it is not true.

— MOTHER THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J.

Ako'y parang masama ang loob kay Monsignor Santos. Alam niyo ang hinihingi ko lang kay Mediatrix? Huwag lang shower, pabagyuhan mo ng petals doon sa obispong ayaw maniwala!
[I resented Monsignor Santos. Do you know what I ask of the Mediatrix? Not just a shower, but for it to storm petals on the bishops who refused to believe!]

— GUILLERMO MILAN

I sort of felt offended when I heard the news that this was a hoax.

— RETIRED GENERAL GODOFREDO JULIANO

Masakit, masakit sa amin talaga.
[It was painful, truly painful for us.]

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

Because my faith is strong that it happened. It is true.

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

The first thing I told Mama Mary, please, let me forget. Just please let me forget all these things especially when I was out already. Please let me forget because I respect what the church declares.

— TERESING CASTILLO

From the beginning, Carmel had its share of detractors. And with the release of the church's official pronouncement, skeptics had a heyday.

The general rumor spreading at the time was that the nuns at Carmel were unscrupulous opportunists, conspiring and inventing stories of apparitions to make money for a new chapel.

There was all this ugly talk. . . . I could not in my heart accept the fact that, you know, that a hoax could be perpetrated by holy nuns, particularly Carmelite nuns, you know, who are known for their faith.

— FELIX BAUTISTA JR.

Can you believe *na itong mga madre, ito'y yapak, tumutulog na walang unan kundi kahoy, nagpakahirap, itong mga madreng ito'y magdadaya? Sasabihin yung mga flowers naiyon ay galing sa itaas, o kuwan na sila nag-aano? Eh, makakapaniwala ba naman ng ganoon?*

[Can you believe that these barefoot nuns, whose only pillow is a piece of wood, who endure great hardships, these nuns will deceive? That they would say those flowers came from above (if it were not true)? Who can believe such a thing?]

— FR. SENEN ENCARNACION

E di napakalaking kasalanan. Kaya kami nandito e para magpakabanal. E kung gagawa noon, e di mas malaki ang kasalanan namin.

Monsignor Rufino Santos,
as Archbishop of Manila



Msgr. Egidio Vagnozzi,
Apostolic Delegate to the
Philippines 1949-51; then
Apostolic Nuncio 1951-58.



Fr. Angelo Blas, O.P.,
psychologist, member of
the commission who ques-
tioned the visionary

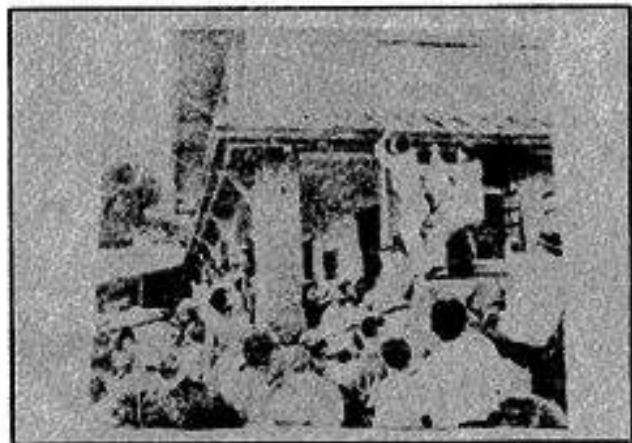


Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani,
Assessor of the Supreme
Sacred Congregation of the
Holy Office from 1930 to
1967





Crowd at Lipa witnessing a shower, 1948



Above: Pilgrims scrambling for petals, 1948

Left: Devotees praying before the Statue of the Mediatrix

Mrs. Aurora Quezon
(under umbrella) visiting
Carmel Lipa, 1948



The "Carmel boys"— who
served as choir for the
masses and attended to the
pilgrims, 1948



Cars of visiting pilgrims at
the convent grounds, 1948



Devotees lining up in the
hot sun for bottles of water
in which petals had been
dipped, 1948





Bishop Obviar presiding over the cornerstone laying of the Church of the Mediatrix of All Grace in 1949



The crowds at Lipa Carmel

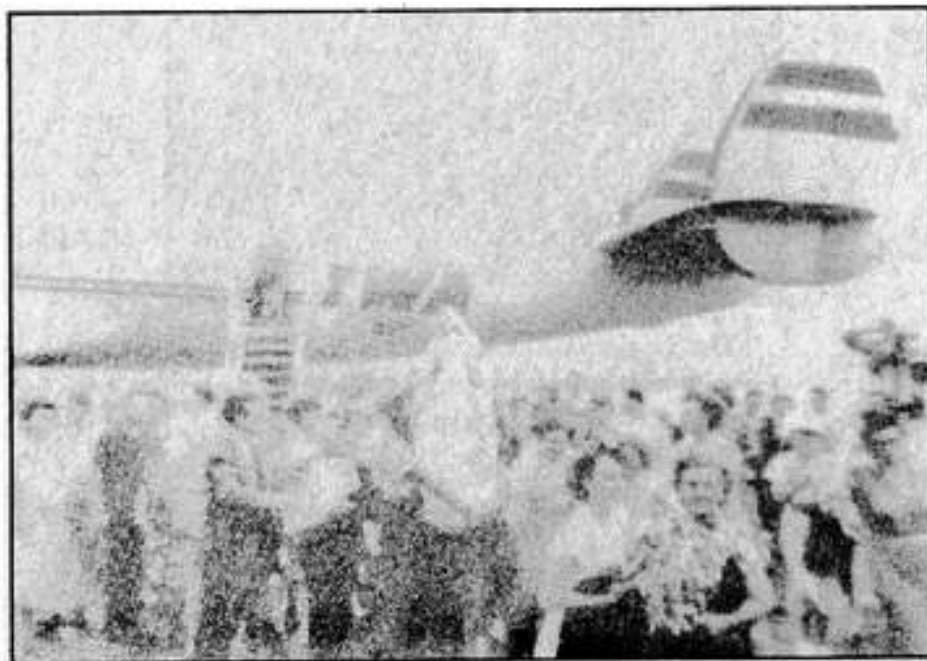


Top:
International publications which
picked up the story of Lipa



Left:
Clipping from local newspaper,
The Manila Times, 1949

Bottom:
The Mediatrix arrives at La Guardia
Airport in New York— August 1949





The Mediatrix in procession
in New York, 1949



Another procession, this
time in Madrid, Spain,
1949



The luminous silhouette in Granja, Lipa,
which appeared for 90 consecutive
evenings in 1990



Monsignor Santos,
sharing a meal with the
Castillo family



Bishop Cesar Guerrero
with the Carmel
Community



Msgr. Mariano Gaviola,
present Archbishop of Lipa



Bishop Godofredo
Pedernal,
retired bishop of
Borlongan, Eastern Samar



Teresita Castillo today, with
adopted daughter Grace



Mother Mary Anne Cuna,
infirmarian at Carmel, banished
to Laoag shortly after the start
the investigation



Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace
and the "petals" of Lipa



Mother Cecilia shortly
before her death in
1982



Teresita Castillo today



Bishop Verzosa



Bishop Obviar

[Then it would be such a grave sin. That is why we are here—to become holy. If we were to do such a thing, then our sin would be very great.]

— MRS. SEVERINA MILAN,
FORMER SISTER STEPHANIE OF THE CROSS, O.C.D.

The sisters never had an intention of building their chapel.

— MONSIGNOR SIMEON RACELIS

I would say that as religious, I think personally, I cannot believe that they just want to deceive just to build a church in their convent, and they will deceive people like that, no.

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

There was talk of a blower hidden within the convent, which the nuns purportedly used to create the famous petal showers. Sister Bernadette of the Mother of God relates that Mother Mary Anne Cuna suffered especially from this talk:

She had difficulty in Laoag because I think they were not believing. They thought she was the mastermind of all those blowers because she is a character. She is stronger than Mother Mary Cecilia. So the blame was being put on her.

We asked Mr. Mariano Sideco, an engineer, about the possibility of using a blower to perpetrate such a fraud:

I was told that the sisters used a blower to blow the petals. But I could not believe it. Being an engineer, I know the effect of a blower.

One, it makes a lot of noise. So those people there, they will notice the noise and then inquire why. Second, when you blow something, it goes in a curved direction, due to force of gravity. But in this case, the petals just happened about 10 feet high and fell directly below. And besides, a big blower cannot reach probably 50 feet, and what happened with Mrs. Quezon was about 70 feet away. How can it reach? So I could not believe.

And until today, Mother Therese of the Holy Face denies having seen any blower anywhere in the convent at that time:

I can testify we have no blower because I'm the one cleaning the whole. . . . We have only that whole cloister, no. And I used to work in the basement. I didn't see any blower.

JK: And did you have electricity in your cells?

Mother Jacinta: None!

JK: In 1948, did you have electricity in your rooms?

Mother Jacinta: When I entered, there was none.

JK: There was no electricity?

Mother Jacinta: None.

JK: So, did you happen to have electric fans?

Mother Jacinta: None!

JK: So you had no electric fans?

Mother Jacinta: None!

JK: Therefore the theory that there was a blower. . .

Mother Jacinta: I do not even know what is a blower.

Yung, because in the province, is it not we blow like that (makes a gesture suggesting the small pipe or bamboo tube into which one blows to generate flames from lighted coals or wood—a device used for makeshift stoves). *Akala ko yon yung*

blower, *yun pala yung ganoon e, malaki daw iyon*. [I thought they meant that kind of blower, but it turns out they meant something very large.]

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Retired General Godofredo Juliano, then the commandant of the Lipa Air Force base, attests that the petals could not have been thrown out of an airplane or helicopter as he would have been aware of the air traffic in the area. He, too, had witnessed one of the famed petal showers:

But I was not able to see anybody. In fact, I went also a little beyond, back of the side of the chapel to see if any of the windows were open. All the windows were closed. . . . I could not determine the source from where they came from, or how they started falling on the courtyard.

Guillermo Milan, then 35, who had fallen away from the church, did more than look. Convinced that the nuns were playing tricks, he clambered up a tree, positioning himself with a Brownie camera next to what he saw was the only open window of the convent's second floor. And a little later, people began to cry "Shower! Shower!", necks craning up as a fragrance filled the air:

Sa madaling salita, kako'y huli ko na ito. Kung ito'y ihuhulog ng madre, ako'y talagang reding-ready. Doon sa ay, naku, ang pangyayari ho, talagang ako'y kinikilabutan. Bakit ito, ang mga tao nakatingala, walang nakakakita, ako ho ay nakakita, mismong isang petal na above the roof. Papanong manggagaling sa bintana? Di, nakumbinsi ako ngayon na hindi sa bintana nanggagaling!

[In other words, I knew I would catch them. If these petals were to be dropped by the nuns, I was ready. But what happened made my hair stand. Why was it that the people looking up saw nothing, whereas I could see one petal above the roof? How could it have come from the window? I was then convinced that it did not come from the window.]

Climbing up to the roof, he was amazed to discover not one, but several freshly plucked petals arranged in the form of a rose:

*Ang aking pinagtaka, wala namang maglalagayo maghuhulog
sapagka't ako'y nakaabang.*

[What surprised me was that no one could have put them there
or dropped them because I was watching closely.]

He hurriedly scooped them up, put them in his pocket, and fought off the pilgrims anxiously grabbing at him for a petal:

Sinasakal ako ng mga tao.

[People were strangling me.]

Upon arriving home and in the presence of two reporters, he discovered that the petals he had so zealously hoarded had disappeared from his pocket and only one remained.

*Dahan-dahan kong binuksan. . . . Nawala yung maraming
nilagay ko, e. . . . Ang isang pumatak ang naroroon.*

[Slowly I opened it. . . . The many petals I put in my pocket
disappeared. . . . Only the one petal remained.]

And so began a change of heart. He ceased his nightly drinking bouts and started to help the nuns distribute the water in which petals had been dipped.

*Di nga ho ako'y parang na-convert. . . . Pakiramdam ko ho'y
nakita niyong ako'y magaang e dahil nga ako'y nag-aral ng
rosary. . . . Hanggang ngayon ho ang rosary hindi ko naka-
kalimutan. At before going to bed every night, ang Blessed
Virgin ho, meron akong devotion sa Blessed Virgin. At noong
ako'y nandidito, nang ako'y ma-convert na, lahat ho ng aking
problem na napakabibigat, solved.*

[So I was converted. . . . I felt light inside because I learned to pray the rosary. . . . Up to now, I do not forget the rosary. And before going to bed every night, I have my devotion to the Blessed Virgin. And when I was here, when I was converted, all my big problems were solved.]

Witnesses were also at a loss to explain how the petals' vertical trajectory could be maintained despite strong winds blowing across the courtyard.

The images found on the petals also mystified many. Detractors, however, said that the nuns had impressed images onto the petals before throwing or blowing them down.

The person who told me about all these was a member of the commission, a scientist, Dr. Quisumbing. At the time, he was director of the Bureau of Science and he told me about how this whole thing was a hoax. It was fake. That some unseen hand or hands had, you know, imprinted this outline of the Virgin on each of the petals with painstaking patience, I imagine.

— FELIX BAUTISTA JR.

Dr. Quisumbing's declaration that these petals were "earthly" and not "heavenly ones" elicited comment from one newspaper columnist who questioned his expertise by asking if he had ever had "occasion to examine any petals that had originated from heaven!"⁵⁵

Despite what seems to be a lack of hard evidence or logical basis, the hoax theory has remained remarkably resilient over the years, and today, the dominant impression many have of Lipa is that of the nuns and their infamous blower.

To this day, a number of journalists continue to propagate this theory,⁵⁶ without, it seems, any effort to check out the facts, irresponsibly repeating or culling from previously published misinformed reports. Without benefit of a thor-

ough investigation, rumor was printed, then published as fact, and it is an outrage that no one ever thought to inquire if, in 1948, in an area laid waste by the devastation of World War II, the Discalced Carmelites sworn to poverty, had the electricity or space required to operate a gigantic machine capable of blowing rose petals across a courtyard and several hundred meters into the sky.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Trials and Suffering

The Lady warned of persecution, and eerily enough, all those associated with Carmel were vilified and made to suffer. Stringent sanctions were imposed upon the community at Lipa.

Yes, our vows were, I mean, were delayed. We could not, we could not make our perpetual vows. Several of us were scheduled already but we could not make it because everything has been cancelled. . . . It took years. It seems 19-, I don't remember but it seems 1953 only, something like that, '54. . . . And also the simple professions of the sisters and the clothings of the sisters were delayed. And then aside from that, we could not receive aspirants.

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

The files of the correspondence between the new prioress and the diocesan administrator bear this out.⁵⁷ And not only were the doors of Lipa Carmel ordered closed to applicants for the religious life, but also—despite repeated pleas—to hired help and any outside assistance. After the documentary was aired, the nuns began to open up and reveal much more. Apparently, during this very painful period, they were not allowed to see members of their family and had been warned that the entire community might be disbanded and dissolved. Many of the older nuns never recovered from that fear.

It is also curious that in chancery records documenting the history of the Diocese of Lipa, all evidence of the existence of the Carmel community has disappeared, and it is ironically not even listed among the religious congregations residing in the area.⁵⁸

The nuns were constantly berated by priests who came to Carmel to lecture and scold them for their alleged misdeeds.

I remember one of them when he came and then we served him. He said, "O, you see! You have plenty of things to serve because you made really, you really made money and you bought all these with that money that you fooled the people." (with tears in her eyes)

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

It is humiliating because, to be told that (voice trails off in a whisper) you are the dishonor of the order, of the church, like that.

— SISTER BERNADETTE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, O.C.D.

For a long time, Sister Elizabeth single-handedly supported the entire community through begging, and was solely responsible for all of Carmel's external needs.* She recalls that it was a very painful time, for she would be sneered and laughed at as she went about her duties in the outside world:

* In a decree signed in the City of Lipa, on April 12, 1951, then Apostolic Administrator Rufino J. Santos ordered—in keeping with the church's official position on the occurrences at Lipa—that "all out-sisters must be admitted within the enclosure for the time being, excepting Sr. Elizabeth, who shall remain outside to attend to the needs of the community."

I have to run here and run there, go to the town. And then *yun ngang sinabi na (sobs) kami daw lahat ang gumawa, inimbento tapos nagpayaman daw kami. Masakit na masakit [they said that we did all these things, invented them to enrich ourselves. It was very, very painful.]*

— SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.

Departure from Carmel

Teresing subsequently left Carmel in 1951. She had been asked to do so purportedly because she had not completed the residency required of a novice due to her frequent sessions with the commission at UST. However, instead of sending her away, Ma Mere, one of the foundresses of Lipa Carmel, instructed her to leave of her own volition as this would enable her to return.

Hindi ako nakatulog, iyak ako ng iyak sa [I could not sleep, I kept crying and crying in the] convent, no, and then I left. I went to my parents.

— TERESING CASTILLO

After two weeks, she thought of paying a courtesy visit to the papal nuncio, Monsignor Egidio Vagnozzi:

So I went up and I was made to wait for half an hour there. Then, when he came out of the door to see me, I stood up and I was going to kiss the ring, he did not want to give his hand.

And then I said, "Your Reverence," I said. "I just came here to let you know that I left Carmel for treatment."

And then he drove me away. He said, "You little devil," he told me. "You better get out of my place." he said that.

Then I knelt again. "So please give me your blessing." He did not give me my blessing. He did not give me any blessing at all, so when I went out, he shouted at me. He nearly pushed me out of the door. (weeps)

Sabi ko, hindi na lang bale [I said never mind], all for Mama Mary na lang, *sabi ko* [I said] in my mind and my intention was very good. *Para bang* just out of courtesy, no, just to let him know that I was out. So *umalis ako* [I left] and then when I went home, I was crying.

— TERESING CASTILLO

She told Cardinal Santos about it, and in the light of his denial of the authenticity of the events, his alleged reply gives one pause.

Sabi niya, talagang totoo yata yong sinabi ng Mahal na Birhen [he said, it must be really true— what the Blessed Virgin said], that you will be suffering up to the end of your life.

— TERESING CASTILLO

The same might have well been said for the main witnesses of the events at Lipa. And yet despite the deep tragedy that marked their lives, in utter obedience they never made any official statements, only confiding to very close friends their belief in the apparitions.

However, those who had given the orders have passed away and the rule of silence no longer applies. Nonetheless; we sought and secured Archbishop Mariano Gaviola's approval for the interviews with the Carmelites of Lipa.

Bishop Verzosa stayed on in the old *palacio* at Lipa until the end of his term, then joined Monsignor Obviar for a time in Lucena, before returning to his hometown in Vigan to die.

Sister Bernadette recounts that Mother Mary Anne Cuna remembered the day the bishop came to say goodbye to the community at Carmel before leaving for Vigan:

He could not tell them that he was leaving. But she told me that he was crying and the only thing that he said was "*in patria—* in Heaven."^{*}

Monsignor Gregorio Salvatus, Verzosa's secretary in Vigan for 27 months, described the aging bishop as a broken man:

A sickly old man, nervous. He was depressed. But he never complained.

To his dying day, the bishop was said to have treasured a replica of the statue of the Mediatrix of All Grace.

This is what he told me, that he did not like to dispose of the image of the virgin in his baptistry. It has remained there.

— MONSIGNOR GREGORIO SALVATUS

Bishop Pedernal opines that Bishop Obviar was also thought to have been party to the nuns' alleged scheme, and this was perhaps the reason for his removal as auxiliary bishop of Lipa—and more importantly, what kept him for so many years from his position:

It had puzzled much the hierarchy . . . because the hierarchy was very much aware of the good things and his holiness of life and the activities and the growth of the diocese.

Cardinal Ricardo Vidal revealed to Pedernal that when he was already one of the priests under Obviar in Quezon, his fellow priests were quite upset at the way Obviar was consistently denied the full status of Bishop.

^{*}After the show's airing, we had a chance to visit with Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, Archbishop of Cebu, who was known to be a protégé of the late Bishop Obviar. In the course of the conversation, Cardinal Vidal mentioned that he was in the seminary when Bishop Verzosa came to say goodbye, and that the Bishop, in the course of his farewell, said in Spanish, almost as if in an aside: "But why are they doing this to me? No matter—we must bow to the will of the church."

I remember one year or not even less than one year before he (Obviar) became ordinary, the late Archbishop Lino Gonzaga—he was then the president of the Bishop's Conference when I was already bishop—he called on me there in Baguio. He said, "What do you know about this? Why is Bishop Obviar until now after three petitions of the whole hierarchy of the Philippines, asking the Holy Father to appoint him as bishop of Lucena, still just an apostolic administrator? Can you tell me something, enlighten me why?"

So he said, "You tell me if (X) is the one who is blocking, are you willing to come with me to Rome, personally to the Holy Father? Are you ready to tell the Holy Father everything you know about this, what happened, why?"

"Yes!" I said. "I'm willing to go." But you know after our talk, after one week it came out, the appointment as Ordinary of Lucena—*hindi na natuloyon* [so it was not necessary to push through with our plans].

— BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL

Monsignor Racelis discloses that Obviar had no doubts about the supernatural nature of the events of Lipa:

He was always telling me that he was fully convinced that in Lipa there was an apparition. Well, he said that is genuine. They were really miraculous, the shower of petals. The only thing that he lamented was that the shower of petals was for a very immediate—was being commercialized and there were fake petals that were being distributed.

He hoped that it would be reopened.

It is curious that Obviar was later to found a religious order which he named the Missionary Catechists of St. Therese. Therese of Lisieux or the Carmelite nun called Therese of the Child Jesus, is also popularly known as the "Little Flower," and is the saint after whom Teresita Castillo was named, for her mother had made a novena to the saint in the hopes of begetting another daughter.

Teresing claims that the Little Flower had at times accompanied the Virgin in her visits to Carmel and had even greeted her on her feast day. This saint is commonly associated with roses. In fact, the church beside the Generalate in Rome of the Carmelite Fathers, contains an effigy of the body of St. Therese, and in the glass case is a copy of her writings, and above it the words, "From the heavens I will let fall a shower of roses."

The headquarters of the Missionary Catechists of St. Therese in Quezon province includes a museum and shrine erected in the memory of Bishop Obviar and is loving testimony of how highly he was regarded by his priests, parishioners, and missionaries.

It is said that favours have been granted and miraculous healings occurred to those who have asked his intercession or prayed at his tomb. At present, there is a movement underway that seeks to present his case to the Causes of Saints.

The Aftermath

Mother Cecilia stayed at Jaro, then at Carmel Gilmore for 13 years and was brought back to Lipa only on March 14, 1963.

She spoke very rarely on the apparitions, but one of the nuns reports that she had indicated that when she died, everything would come to light.

According to Mother Aimee of Jesus, who was prioress at that time, Mother Cecilia must have had a premonition of this. Mother Aimee recounts that sometime in 1982, she had asked the former prioress if there was truth to the apparitions of 1948. Mother Cecilia emphatically replied that she would vouch for their authenticity, and then went on to ask for permission "to die" in order to hasten the cause of the Mediatrix of All Grace. Mother Aimee explained that Mother Cecilia had so believed in the apparitions that she had been willing to offer her life for the vindication of Mary. Soon afterwards—as fate would have it—on December 13, 1982, she fell from the stairs.

It was the staircase of the novices; we were further in the recreation of the community and they heard a big noise and it was Mother Mary Cecilia. She was lying down on the floor. She struck her head on the window sill, then from the window sill to the cement floor, and she was bleeding very much. But she was still conscious. When we, when we brought her up, she was still talking.

I think she said only, "It's painful." And then she was brought to the infirmary and we called for the priest for the last anointing, and then she was brought to the hospital. But she was already unconscious when she was brought to the hospital. And that evening, she died. It must have . . . it must have been a stroke.

— SISTER BERNADETTE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, O.C.D.

A week before her death, however, Mother Cecilia telephoned Teresing, requesting her to come to Lipa as she had something very important to say. But Teresing was bedridden with fever, and asked what it was as she could not come immediately.

Nagka-hint lang ako diyan nang sinabi niya na [I only got a hint when she said], "Do you know that Mama Mary is so beautiful?"

"Mother!" *sabi ko* [I said], "How did you see? Did you see her?" I was on the telephone. Now, *naku, iniba na naman ang istorya. Ganoon e, nakakabigla ba siya* [She changed the topic. That's how she is, she takes you by surprise].

— TERESING CASTILLO

Teresing had suspected that Mother Cecilia had seen the Virgin and on one other occasion, had questioned the prioress about this, mentioning that a young Vietnamese sister had caught her in the hermitage, conversing and laughing before the image:

I was telling her, "O, *di siguro talaga* [perhaps] you are seeing Mama Mary. And I'll be very happy," *sabi ko* [I said], "I'll be very, very happy," *sabi kong ganoon* [I said]. Change *na naman ang* conversation [She changed the topic of conversation again].

Sister Bernadette of the Mother of God recalls an equally intriguing conversation she had with the former prioress. This conversation had taken place in front of the statue of the Mediatrix:

She said that, "This statue, she is already 18, she looks 18. In this statue, she looks 18. But in reality, she looks only 15 years old."

Sister Bernadette regrets that she did not pursue this conversation, for it had certainly occurred to her at the time that the prioress must have seen the Virgin to have said such a thing. On still another occasion, Sister Bernadette heard that the Virgin had consulted Mother Cecilia on the position of the statue's arms:

I asked her, "Is it true, Mother, that you were the one who told Our Lady that you would prefer her to be with extended hands than on her breast?"

She said "Yes, because she looks more motherly with that position."

These enigmatic last remarks of the prioress are some of the many signs that the story of Lipa has not yet ended. For even way back in the 1950s, circumstances seemed to prepare the way, as it were, for the reinvestigation of Lipa at some future, more hospitable time.

Teresing, for one, was prevented by her deteriorating health from returning to Carmel, where access to her testimony would have been difficult.

Some of the nuns who were vital witnesses likewise left Carmel for a variety of reasons—a circumstance which enabled them to speak freely on the events either as lay persons or as members of other congregations—foregoing the need of obtaining permission from the bishop of Lipa.

Sister Stephanie, for instance, left Carmel in 1952 and could not re-enter because of her failing health. She subsequently married a Lipa convert, Guillermo Milan, who created a stir in 1948 when he climbed to the rooftop of the Carmelite convent in search of petals. Mother Therese of the Holy Face left in 1966 to found her own congregation. Sister Clotilde Nicolas, O.S.A., then known as Monica of the Savior, left Carmel because she was diagnosed as tubercular, but upon subsequent examination at the Quezon Institute, was found to be completely healthy. She then returned to the religious life and went on to join the Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation.

E ako, free ngayon makipag-usap sa akin dahil walang magbabawal sa akin.

[I was free then to talk because no one could censure me.]

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

But perhaps even more intriguing is that Mother Cecilia, aside from affirming the authenticity of the apparitions, apparently also believed that the Virgin would return to Carmel. Two weeks before her death, she spoke again to Sister Bernadette.

She told me that the year is ending and Our Lady is not yet here. Because she is always expecting that Our Lady is coming back.

— SISTER BERNADETTE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, O.C.D.

Testimonies as to Mother Cecilia's character also make it difficult to associate such a woman with deception—especially on a large scale as would have been necessary for a phenomenon like Lipa. Mother Cecilia was known for her virtue and her gentle, motherly care—and was very much loved by all those who came in contact with her.

I don't think she was telling any lies to us.

— MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL,
O.C.D.

Yes, I trusted her. . . . I know she is good. She is a holy, holy woman.

— SISTER CLOTILDE NICOLAS, O.S.A.

The first papal nuncio of the Philippines, Monsignor Egidio Vagnozzi—described in the book *The Inner Elite* as “fellow archconservative and friend of Cardinal Ottaviani”—went on in 1958 to become apostolic delegate in Washington, after which he was recalled and made Cardinal in 1967 and appointed president of the Prefecture of the Economic affairs of the Holy See.

We quote from his short biography in the book, *The Inner Elite*:

This was a big disappointment to him. Earlier he had thought himself in line for the papacy, and he had counted at least in getting a major post in the Curia. What he ended up with was a sinecure, the title and salary, without effective control of the operations of this major Vatican financial institution.

Monsignor Rufino J. Santos, initially apostolic administrator then archbishop of Lipa, went on to become Archbishop of Manila, and the first Filipino cardinal.

Failing health, specifically a serious heart condition, prevented Teresita Castillo from returning to Carmel. In her own words, she "cried and cried for over two years." Her separation from the religious life caused her such deep grief that in an effort to lift her spirits, her parents persuaded her to go on a European tour which was led by Monsignor Santos. Eight priests also comprised a part of the tour group, among them Monsignor Casas—who had reportedly also been a part of the investigative commission.

One cannot help but wonder—why were these officials of the Church not more circumspect or wary about being seen with Teresita Castillo? After all, she had been labelled a fraud, a crackpot, or judged by some to have been the victim of an over-active imagination that had duped an entire nation.

In fact, Monsignor Santos continued for some time to function somewhat as her spiritual director, and had become a family friend—spending a few vacations at their farm, and at times saying Mass at their home. Up until the last few years of his life, Teresing would visit him at the Cardinal's villa at least once a month for confession or an occasional dinner. It was only a little over a year ago that she discovered his role in the sentence on Lipa.

Upon his recommendation, she began to work with Fr. Leo English at the Redemptorist Church in Baclaran, assisting in the production of the now very popular English-Tagalog dictionaries—a job she continues to hold to this day.

However, malicious tongues have commented on what has evolved into a lasting friendship, for Teresing has continued to serve and nurse Fr. English, whom she affectionately calls "lolo"—the Filipino word for "grandfather."

Sometime in the early 1960s, she was involved in a vehicular accident which resulted in an injury to the nerve at the base of her brain. This brought on epileptic seizures, but after two years of medication, the seizures disappeared.

She never married, but adopted an infant left on the steps of Baclaran Church. Grace Irene is now a lively, intelligent 19-year-old college student. Mother and daughter lead a very quiet and unobtrusive life in the suburbs of Manila.

In obedience to the church, she has never spoken publicly about the apparitions nor issued any statements to the press despite the proliferation of newspaper and magazine articles maligning her and criticizing the events of Lipa.

However, because of the escalating demand to reopen the investigation and after much prayer and consultation with her spiritual directors and Archbishop Gaviola of Lipa, she reluctantly consented to tell her story. Quite understandably, she is nervous about the resurgence of interest in the case, and has tried to prepare herself for the controversies that she knows will come. To this day Teresing has had to contend with accusations of insanity and fraud.

And Again . . .

What caused the Church's rather hasty pronouncement on the apparitions of Lipa, premised as it was on questionable grounds and on what seemed to be a rather flawed investigation?

Such efforts by the church hierarchy to clamp down on reported supernatural manifestations also characterized other supposed apparitions in other parts of the world. Since 1933, more than 200 other presumed revelations have suffered the same fate.

It is curious though that there was a series of so-called apparitions that occurred in the late 1940s that somehow seem related to Lipa. We refer to two in particular: "Our Lady of All Nations" which began in Amsterdam on March 1945 and lasted for over 14 years,⁵⁹ and the "Great Mediatrix of Graces" which occurred in 1946 in Marienfried, Pfaffenhofen, Germany.⁶⁰ In Marienfried, she requested, as she did in Fatima and as she was said to have done two years later in Lipa, for the Saturday devotion. And the apparition of Amsterdam was by far one of the most controversial as it dealt—as did the apparition of the Virgin

of the Revelation in Tre Fontanne, Rome⁶¹—with the incorruptibility of her body, and surprisingly, with a pronouncement regarding the development of a last dogma in Marian history.

It is also somewhat related to the celebrated events connected with the Virgin of Akita in Japan, for the sculptor of the Akita virgin, a non-Christian, was inspired by a prayer card which was a reproduction of a painting requested by the “Lady of All Nations.” The visionary’s locutions and related phenomena were recognized by then Bishop John S. Ito in a pastoral letter which he also submitted to the Holy Father John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger.⁶² In November 1990, his actions and pastoral letter were upheld by the Japanese Conference of Bishops.

When Bishop Ito visited the Philippines in 1991, he then told me that he had flown to Amsterdam to meet with Ida Perdemann, the visionary of Our Lady of All Nations, to examine points of similarity between the two apparitions. He then disclosed that he had received a letter from the Bishop of Amsterdam requesting his opinion on said apparition, with an invitation to return to Amsterdam to discuss this. However, failing health on Bishop Ito’s part prevented him from doing so.

In the Amsterdam apparition, Mary supposedly called on all Christian peoples to band themselves together and asked that the theologians see their battle for the Marian dogma through to the finish, assuring them of her help, revealing that she was being sent by the Lord and Master who wanted to give this world Spiritual Oneness.

I come as Co-Redemptrix—Mediatrix at this time. Co-Redemptrix I was already at the Annunciation. This means that the Mother became Co-Redemptrix by the will of the Father.

Tell your theologians this. Tell them moreover, that this will be the last dogma in Marian history. This picture shall prepare the way. Have this picture brought to the whole world, and thereby I mean the whole world, not only your country. The world is degenerating. The world is being afflicted with disaster upon disaster. The world will be and is economically and materially at a dead end. Wars will continue until the Spirit of Truth comes in with His help. Get the people back to the Cross.

— MESSAGE GIVEN ON THE 37TH APPARITION,
NOVEMBER 15, 1951⁶³

Canon Rene Laurentin, theologian, leading Mariologist and author, explains that especially during the postwar years, the Catholic hierarchy as a whole was simply not predisposed to such mystic phenomena as apparitions of the Virgin Mary or of any other heavenly being.

In his *Report on the Church and Apparitions*, Laurentin points out that there was a period of effective repression and that apparitions suffered from the great severity of Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani, assessor of the Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office. We quote:

This rigorous and traditional man was responsible for the matter of private revelation and took harsh action through his decisions and imperative orders to bishops. It was through his influence, so it seems, that Bishop Heylen, who was favorable to the apparitions of Beauraing, was removed from the decision process.⁶⁴

We interviewed Laurentin in 1989 in San Francisco and questioned him about this:

He was very severe, for apparition and charism; special extraordinary charism. He put an end to different causes of canonization like Yvonne or the Polish sister Faustina. I think during the war, it was a time of trouble. He was afraid to see a tendency to illuminism and his first thought was to be severe.

He was severe against heresy and every tendency to heresy. He was severe for every tendency to illuminism. Because it is better to prevent than to act against the bad thing.

Laurentin explained that the Church is very prudent with regard to apparitions, and accords them a low status because they are signs which reach us through our senses and are subject to illuminism—the illusions of subjectivity. This attitude began to develop as early as the second century, when the heresy of Montanism had spread, which claimed, among other things, a separate and superior revelation that caused its own prophets to assume an authority over that of the bishops.

The ultra-conservative Cardinal Ottaviani, also known as “the Holy Terror of the Holy Office” or “Big Brother in a Cassock”,⁶⁵ who was described as probably being the most feared man in the Vatican and had often acted as the self-defined “policeman” of its faith and morals, was retired by Paul VI in 1967. Three years later, the floodgates were opened when that same pope abolished the canon law that forbade any publication about apparitions. According to Laurentin, Ottaviani’s successor, Cardinal Seper, proved to be more open and flexible, and it was in this spirit that he worked out the new criteria for judging the nature of the presumed apparitions and revelations.⁶⁶

Laurentin, who was consulted on the criteria, says that this attitude of openness is shared by John Paul II:

With our new pope, everything is more open because he has a very good and open religious sensibility to every type of action of God. He wants not to put action of God in a square, but to see where God is doing something and it is also my way.

I have a domestic, realistic philosophy, and I think I have to be open to every reality, to material reality. . . . It's reality which gives me its law. And I have to be open to the reality of God—mysterious reality but living reality . . . I try to appreciate everything not from my point of view, from my subjectivity, but from this objectivity of God and of creation of God.

I try to be honest with God and to be open to God modestly and it is this openness, I think, which is very important to every Christian, to every human being. Because with that, we can perceive the reality and not project our ideas.

Re-opening the Case of Lipa

In July 1982, Francisco Dychangco together with Nelly Kison, Cruz Laurel, and some others, formed the Marian Research Center which collected testimonies and information relating to the events of 1948. They gathered more than 5,000 signatures from the laity, pressing Lipa Archbishop Mariano Gaviola to have the apparitions of Lipa re-investigated.

Well, it is our pastoral duty to listen to the faithful, to pay respect to their own feelings. But we have also to safeguard the welfare of the Church, generally. That is where the problem of making a decision lies quite heavily.

— BISHOP MARIANO GAVIOLA OF LIPA

Francisco Dychangco now claims that:

There were at least around four bishops who told me, "Work for it, work for it."

Gaviola, in explaining the criteria for deciding whether an apparition is to be recognized or not, asks:

Are there conversions happening?

In August of 1989, a small group of Lipa devotees began to get together every Saturday to honor Mary and to pray for the reopening of the investigation into the events of Lipa.

Unbeknown to them, they were fulfilling one of the requests the Lady had made in 1948, namely that she be honored on Saturdays under her various titles.

Forty years of silence were eclipsed in a matter of months, and the first penitential procession in honor of Mary Mediatrix of All Grace was held three months later, and public declaration of the events of 1948 made the first time since the proclamation of the unfavorable verdict.

At the end of the ceremonies, testimonies were given on recent cures attributed to the intercession of Mary Mediatrix.

Are there phenomenal healings happening?

— BISHOP MARIANO GAVIOLA OF LIPA

Luz Palmares related the miraculous healing of her son, Raymond Julius, who suffered from a mitral valve prolapse, enlargement of the heart, and various other vascular illnesses. Aside from that, he had a cleft palate and couldn't speak normally. She began a novena to Mary Mediatrix of All Grace, hung a scapular with a petal around her son's neck, and within a few months, his condition improved so dramatically that the operation recommended by the doctors was no longer necessary. Moreover, Julius soon found that he could speak normally. We now reproduce in print what we have of our interview of Mr. Palmares:

PALMARES. I'm Raymond Julius Palmares.

JK: How old are you, Raymond?

PALMARES: I'm 20-ah-22 years old.

JK: And what do you do?

PALMARES: I'm a music teacher from St. Bridget's College High School Department. (sings in a normal and beautiful voice) "*Panginoon, narito ako. . .*" ["Lord, here I am . . ."] (Camera zooms in to reveal cleft palate.)

According to his mother, Palmares now hopes to become a priest.

In February 1990, a strange phenomenon was reported in the Granja district of Lipa, a few blocks away from Carmel. A luminous white outline of what seemed to be a woman in prayer began to appear in the evenings on one of the leaves of a tall coconut tree.

Then 15-year-old RJ Garcia, a member of the protestant fundamentalist born-again movement, was reportedly the first to see it. He was convinced that it was the Virgin, and has since been receiving instruction in the Catholic faith.

Many saw it too, and soon crowds from all over Metro Manila and the outlying provinces flocked to Granja. The phenomenon received considerable print, TV, and radio coverage.

The luminous figure was visible from about 6:30 in the evening to the early hours of dawn. Some say other figures were visible as well, such as that of St. Bernadette. Others claim to have seen tiny twinkling lights dotting the leaves of the coconut tree. Some theorized that the image was merely projected onto the leaf by some trickster, or the reflection from the nearby lamp post, but others countered that it couldn't have been a reflection as the image would remain intact even as the wind blew the leaf back and forth.

Reports of this type of phenomenon have recently surfaced. Silhouettes of the Madonna have been seen in some parts of the United States and more specifically, in what used to be the USSR. The Ukrainian mystic, nationalist, and Catholic activist, Josyp Terelya, who had also been favored with apparitions of Mary, reveals in his book that the wonders of the Mother of God not only occurred in sites of worship that the Soviets had destroyed, but also in other places as well, for silhouettes of the Madonna were also witnessed at hospitals, on the walls of schools, and in the windows of stores.⁶⁷

But there are those who claim to have seen more than an illumination on a leaf.

When we arrived there at the scene and looked upon the tree, instead of seeing the Fatima, I told my wife it's not the Fatima. It's the Lady of Miraculous Medal because the veil is blue, it's not all white. And her hands were spread like this. So my mother was also seeing the same thing.

I was crying, I was trembling. . .

— ARMANDO MENDOZA JR.

The silhouette was visible for 90 consecutive evenings. Then, on May 21, the day after the silhouette ceased to appear, Sister Alphonse—a witness to Teresing's blindness in 1948—passed away. We were told that before she died, she had repeatedly asked when she would be interviewed for the Keithley Report as she had much to tell. A few days before her death, she was visited by Archbishop Gaviola. It is reported that after she made her confession, they had a long conversation. Her dying request was to have the image of Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace exposed in the chapel of Carmel. The day afterwards, on the instructions of Archbishop Gaviola, the controversial statue was brought out and displayed for the first time in over forty years.

Showers . . . Again

On January 24, 1991, rose petals were again reported to have fallen at Lipa Carmel.

Teresing, her driver, Manuel "Maning" Gemino, and a real estate agent were inside the church, in front of the statue of the Mediatrix, when petals suddenly fell from out of nowhere:

Yung mga roses, parang nagmula sa kawalan, mga mataas pa dito sa halaman na ito. Unti-unting nagkalaglagan. Parang hindi basta bigla, yung parang nagse-sway (gestures) yung paglaglag. Ngayon, puting-puti ang mga roses . . . pure na pure na puti.

Hindi, hindi kami makasalita, ba, wow, "Panginoon ko," kako, "Patawarin mo po ako," kako. "Nang — ako," kako, (makes the sign of the cross) "Kung eto man milagro," kako, "Patawarin n'yo po ako," kako.

Pagka diyan, naku!!! Noong nakita ni Sister Celine, noong, naku, sabi niya, "Nagmimilagro si Mama Mary. It's miracle! It's miracle!"

[The roses seemed to come from nowhere, from some point higher than this plant (indicates tall plant beside altar). They fell one by one. They did not drop suddenly, but they seemed to sway as they fell. The roses were very white, pure white.

We could not speak. "Lord," I said, "Have mercy on me! If this is a miracle, have mercy on me," I said.

When Sister Celine saw (the petals), she said, "Mama Mary is working a miracle! It's a miracle! It's a miracle!"

— MANUEL GEMINO

The incident made a deep impression upon Mang Maning:

Yung kuwan ko ba, yung feeling ko ba sa Panginoon na parang kako, may mensahe para sa akin na pinagmilagruhan ako kasi hindi naman ako palasimba, eh. Mula noon, binigyan ako ni Sister Celine ng Bible at saka prayer book at saka, ano, sabi, "Magsimba ka." Parang damdamin ko parang ewan ko ba hindi ma-explain sa iyo. Kasi minsan alam mo pag ganyan parang kuwan ako, parang emo-laki ng emotion ko hindi ko mapigil—parang maluha ba ako, pero sa talagang buhay ko, hindi pa ako umiiyak, kahit anong mga problema.

[My feeling was that God had a message for me, that's why a miracle happened to me. You see, I was not a regular church-goer. After that time, Sister Celine gave me a Bible and a prayerbook and said, "Go to Mass." I cannot explain what I felt; I felt such emotion. It was as if I was about to cry, but I have never cried in my entire life, no matter what my problems have been.]

A few days afterwards, six children playing in the garden at Carmel reportedly saw the Statue of the Virgin of Carmel come to life.

Nakita ko po e, yun pong mata ay lumuluha po atsaka po yung paa po ay nagclose feet. . . . Hinawakan ko po yung palad. Eh, naramdaman ko po na malambot.

[I saw her eyes tear and her feet come close together. I held the palm of her hand, and it was soft.]

— PAOLO DON RABAGO

Noon po kaming nagdasal nakita ko pong umiiyak. Pagkatapos po naming magdasal, ngumiti po. . . . Hinawakan ko po yun pong damit. E lumubog po yung kamay po, ang kamay ko. Lumubog po, lampasan po.

[When we were praying, I saw her crying. After we prayed, she smiled. I held her dress. My hands sank into it.]

— ARISTOTLE CASTRO

Malambot yung ano po, damit.

[Her dress was soft.]

— DELFIN DAYOT

Noong hinawakan ko lang po doon sa damit ay malambot po.
[I held her dress and it was soft.]

— RENCIS RABAGO

Nakita ko ito pong damit ay nasasalimpad po ng hangin.
[I saw her dress being blown by the wind.]

— ERIC LATARDE

*Paghalik ko po sa paa, nakita ko po, naramdaman po na,
naramdaman ko po ang para nga po, ang paa ay nagalaw.*
[When I kissed her feet, I felt them move.]

— KEVIN ARANZA

This is extraordinary, and it is another factor for me to be prompted to study this really.

— ARCHBISHOP MARIANO GAVIOLA

In the last six months, petal showers have occurred with some regularity in Teresing's home and other places as well. Her daughter Grace has seen them as well:

Sort of here (points to area near the ceiling light in their bedroom), it was fluttering, sort of suspended in the air.

In fact, the petal showers progressed to another stage. Several witnesses, including a priest, were present when full roses materialized out of thin air and landed on the stairs, altar, and bedroom of the Castillo home.

And Teresing reports, with joy and apprehension, that she has begun to receive messages from Mary again. Her daughter Grace, with whom she shares a bedroom, has revealed that she herself has been witness to some extraordinary occurrences. Apparently, Teresing's inner locutions would be heralded by flashes of golden light streaking back and forth from a picture of the Mediatrix to other parts of the room. During such times, Grace would discreetly leave the room, not wishing to intrude upon what she felt should

be a sacred, private moment. She then observed silvery light streaming out from under the door of the bedroom when her mother was supposedly in conversation with the Virgin.

When pressed for an opinion, Msgr. Gaviola responded with:

If at all we are going to reopen this, we will do this as secretly as possible, as privately as possible, so that the composition or the members of the commission will not be under some sort of, too much pressure that they might be exposed to even their own personal biases.

On July 16, the Feast of our Lady of Carmel, Archbishop Mariano Gaviola declared that the controversial image of Mary Mediatrix of All Grace would, for the entire duration of his term as Archbishop, be exposed to the public in the chapel of the Carmelite convent of Lipa.

The list of healings attributed to the petals and intercession of the Mediatrix continues to grow, and lay groups are busily gathering the testimonies. Prayers continue at Carmel every Saturday, and penitential processions wind their way around the town on the afternoon of the 12th of every month. The wait is on. In the meantime, after more than 40 years, it's showering "petals" again.

Today's world can dismiss the petal showers as merely "paranormal" instead of supernatural—insisting that certain individuals are capable of bringing about incidents of extraordinary phenomena. We can always explain everything away. But then the question is—through all this rationalization, where have we left room for the action of God?



In this, the final stages of proofreading the manuscript, we are happy to reveal that a secret commission had indeed been set up by the Archbishop of Lipa. He has indicated to us that he is urging the commission to speed up the investigation as he hopes to come up with a pronouncement in a few months.

Notes

CHAPTER ONE

The Apparitions of Lipa: A Prelude

- ¹ This section draws from the following sources: Maria Kalaw Katigbak, "When Coffee Bloomed in Lipa," in Alfredo Roces, Editor-in Chief, *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*, Vol. 7 (RPLA Pty Ltd., Time Distributors Sdn Bhd; reprinted under licence by Felta Book Sales, Inc.), pp. 1760-1764; Francisco Villanueva, Jr., *The Wonders of Lipa* (Manila: Francisco Villanueva Jr., 1949); Stephen Breen, "Inside Lipa" (xeroxed article).
- ² The Keithley Report's account of the apparitions of 1948 is based on an account written by Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D., a short document written in 1989 by the visionary, Teresing, and on our interview with her in February of 1990.
- ³ See: Melchiorre of Pobladora and Alessandro of Ripabottoni, eds., translated by Mary F. Ingoldsby, English version edited by Father Gerardo Di Flumeri, O.F.M. Cap., *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina; Letters Vol. 1, Correspondence With His Spiritual Directors (1910-1922)*. (Italy: Edizioni "Voce di Padre Pio," 1980).

CHAPTER THREE

Trials

- ⁴ See: "Our Lady of America—The Call to a Life of Purity: Messages to Sister Mildred Mary, a Contemplative Nun in Ohio, U. S. A" in *Signs of the Times*, September 1989, vol. 1, no. 6, p. 2
- ⁵ *The Victorious Queen of the World: The spiritual diary of a contemporary mystic, Sr. Natalia of Hungary* (California, U.S.A.: Two Hearts Books and Publishers, 1988).

CHAPTER SIX

Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace

- ⁶ Ramon Perez, translated by Annette I. Curot Matthews, edited by Ann Orhelein, *Garabandal: The Village Speaks* (New York: The Workers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Inc., 1981; second edition: 1985), p. 28.
- ⁷ See: Alejandro Cifuentes B., *Luz Y Sombra En Peñablanca (El Monte Carmelo de Chile)*, (Chile: March 1986).
- ⁸ See: St. Louis-Marie Grignon de Monfort, translated by Father Frederick William Faber, D.D., edited and annotated by The Fathers of the Company of Mary, *True Devotion to Mary* (Illinois: Tan Books and Publishers, Inc., 1985).
- ⁹ Julia Kim, translated by Aeri Jean, with introduction by Rev. Robert Hughes, S.M., *Diary of Julia Kim: Messages of Our Lady in Naju City, Korea* (unpublished manuscript, 1991; reproduced by the Medjugorje Center of San Jose).
- ¹⁰ From a document written in 1989 by Teresita Castillo.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Shower! Shower!

- ¹¹ See Appendix D for a listing of selected newspaper and magazine articles on Lipa from 1948-1950.

- 12 Peter Richards (Reuters correspondent), "Will Lipa Become New Lourdes? Miraculous Apparitions Claimed at Carmelite Convent," April 13, 1949.
- 13 "Miracle Happens in Sampaguita's *Milagrong Birhen*" in *The Evening News*, June 11, 1949.
- 14 "Shower of Roses in Lipa Convent Interests Scientists, Educators" in *The Manila Times*, November 20, 1948.
- 15 "Carmelite Airs Complaint to Quirino" in *The Evening News*, May 31, 1949; "Quirino Attends Mass in Convent" in *The Manila Bulletin*, June 1, 1949.
- 16 "Army of Pilgrims Throngs Lipa to Witness Miracle of Roses" in *The Manila Times*, November 29, 1948; "Mark First Lipa Miracle Anniversary with Masses" in *The Daily Mirror*, September 12, 1949.
- 17 See article by Antonio S. Gabila in *The Evening News*, July 9, 1949; "Lipa Convent Fast Becoming A National Shrine" in *The Evening News*, May 21, 1949, p. 15.
- 18 "Special Novena Proposed for Lady Mediatrix of All Graces" in *The Manila Times*, May 7, 1949.
- 19 "Lipa Convent Fast Becoming A National Shrine" in *The Evening News*, May 21, 1949, p. 15.
- 20 "Army of Pilgrims Throngs Lipa To Witness Miracle Of Roses" in *The Manila Times*, November 29, 1948.
- 21 "Chief Justice and Noted Scientist Convinced Petal Shower a Miracle" in *The Manila Times*, January 24, 1949 (crowd estimates of 20,000 and 500,000); "70,000 Catholics Go on Pilgrimage to Lipa" in *The Manila Chronicle*, January 27, 1949.
- 22 "PAL Planes To Fly Pilgrims To Lipa" in *The Manila Bulletin*, March 4, 1949.
- 23 "Miracle of Rose Showers Drawing Crowds of Devotees" in *The Manila Times*, November 17, 1948; "Shower of Roses in Lipa Convent Interests Scientists, Educators" in *The Manila Times*, November 20, 1948; "Notables in Throng Brave Rain to See Miracle of Roses" in *The Manila Times*, November 22, 1948.

CHAPTER EIGHT
The Miracle of the Roses

- ²⁴ "Shower of Roses in Lipa Convent Interests Scientists, Educators" in *The Manila Times*, November 20, 1948.
- ²⁵ "A Message for America" in *The Scapular National Catholic Magazine*, September-October 1949, vol. 8, no. 5, p. 8.
- ²⁶ The Marian Research Center has written testimonies from Magdalena A. Doso, Odeza B. Hernandez, Godofredo M. Juliano, and Gertrudia C. Manalo—who obtained petals with images during the showers of 1948-1949. We were also able to examine some of the actual petals from these early showers, thanks to the generosity of their owners: Delly Dionisio, Nelly Lopez, Carmen Kalaw, Zenaida Lirag, Danny Dolor, Governor Vicente Mayo, Mother Therese of the Holy Face, and Sister Amelia Fernandez.
- ²⁷ See "More Miracles at Lipa Shrine" in *The Manila Times*, March 18, 1949. The Marian Research Center has also gathered testimonies of people who found petals among their personal effects: among them, the testimonies of Telma Villaprudente (dated January 29, 1983), Zenaida Catipon Tiomico, and Eriberto A. Gamilla.
- ²⁸ "Teresa's Parents Pay Convent Visit" in *The Sunday Times*, January 30, 1949.
- ²⁹ "Lipa Convent Fast Becoming A National Shrine" in *The Evening News*, May 21, 1949, p. 15.
- ³⁰ Ibid.; "Rose Shower Recurs in Lipa" in *The Manila Times*, January 3, 1949.
- ³¹ "Chief Justice and Noted Scientist Convinced Petal Shower A Miracle" in *The Manila Times*, January 24, 1949; "Record Crowd Sees Lipa 'Miracle'" in *The Manila Times*, February 13, 1949; "More Miracles at Lipa Shrine" in *The Manila Times*, March 18, 1949. The Marian Research Center has also obtained written testimonies from witnesses: Yolanda L. Bautista, Beatriz Silva, Minda Templo, Marie A. Verzosa—who saw the rosary move; Consuelo F. Africa, Gertrudia Manalo—who saw the statue and flowers move. (Some of the signatures in these testimonies not legible—our apologies to those whose names we may have misspelled.)

³² See: "Worshippers See Miracle Images at Lipa Shrine" in *The Manila Times*, April 16, 1949). The Marian Research Center has also obtained written testimonies from Yolanda L. Bautista and Antonio F. Sternberg, who claimed to have seen images on the aluminum sheet.

³³ "Vision of Our Lady Appears in Sky Above Sampaloc Lake" in *The Evening Chronicle*, June 2, 1949. The Marian Research Center has also gathered written testimonies from some witnesses: Ricardo A. Raymundo, Aida V. Eubinag, Rumelia Magcasi, Paulita Eubinag, Emilia J. Inciong, and Rory Valdellon (Some of the signatures not legible-our apologies to those whose names we may have misspelled).

³⁴ Cagayan de Oro City is the capital of the province of Misamis Oriental in Mindanao.

³⁵ See Rosario Mencias Querol, "Froth n' Frippery" in *The Evening News*, January 29, 1949; "Miracle of Roses Reported to Have Been Noticed at Sampaloc Residence" in *The Manila Chronicle*, May 11, 1949; "Lipa Inspired Phenomenon in Sampaloc Draws City Crowds" in *The Manila Times*, May 11, 1949; and "Report Shower of Rose Petals in Mandaluyong" in *The Manila Chronicle*, July 19, 1949).

CHAPTER NINE

Cures

³⁶ Our account of the cure of Socorro Mendoza Dichoso is based on our interviews with witnesses and on the following documents, compiled by the Marian Research Center: (1) "An Extraordinary Cure," testimony of Dr. Telesforo Mendoza as related by Dr. Ronaldo Asuncion, Head, Division of Radiological Sciences, University of Santo Tomas, signed by Dr. Asuncion and Mrs. Rosario Cosme Mendoza; (2) Felix B. Bautista Jr., "Lipa Rose Petal Heals Child's Skull," in *The Evening News*, May 21, 1949, p. 14.

³⁷ "An Extraordinary Cure," testimony of Dr. Telesforo Mendoza as related by Dr. Ronaldo Asuncion, Head, Division of Radiological Sciences, U.S.T., signed by Dr. Asuncion and Mrs. Rosario Cosme Mendoza.

- ³⁸ Our account of the cure of Rosalina Pundan is based on the following documents, compiled by the Marian Research Center: (1) "Miraculous Cure": notes on the cure of Rosalina Fundan as found in Dr. Ricardo Raymundo's notebook entitled "Ensayos Literarios del Dr. Ricardo A. Raymundo"; with accompanying statement of verification signed by the doctor's son, Godehardo G. Raymundo, M.D., August 9, 1983; (2) testimony signed by Marcos Pundan and Miguela Dausin, no date.
- ³⁹ Our account of the cure of Thelma Romero is based on Dr. Florentina Romero's written testimony, obtained by the Marian Research Center.
- ⁴⁰ Fr. Martin Casey, S.J., "The Miracle," in *The Sunday Times Magazine*, December 24, 1950.
- ⁴¹ Our account of the cure of Melania Sunga is based on the following documents, obtained by the Marian Research Center: (1) "Accounts from Sister Melania Maria Sunga, R.A. (her personal testimony)," October 17, 1983; (2) statement of certification signed by Sister Melania Maria Sunga, R.A., November 10, 1983; (3) certification signed by Avelino Balbin, M.D., of Candon, Ilocos Sur; (4) joint affidavit signed by Otila A. Abaya, Clemente M. Abaya, Alicia M. Abaya, and Josefa L. Abaya, August 7, 1983; (5) joint written testimony from Dolores S. Lintag, Gaudiosa A. Alfonso, Benita Y. Viray, Melchu S. Alfonso, Paz Sunga, Lourdes Viray, Mrs. Teresita Pilar, Virginia P. Flores, Segundina Isip—no date; (6) written testimony from Ven A. Cadena, August 8, 1983; (7) written testimony from Laura M. Abaya—no date; (8) testimony of Ernesto C. Guerrero, August 8, 1983; (9) testimony signed by Feliza Gapay; (10) testimony signed by Augusto Flores, Glicería Ramirez, Maximiano Pimlac, Leny S. Pavia—no date; (11) testimony signed by Manuela M. Vda Gallardo—no date; (12) testimony signed by Domingo Isip and Rosita C. Isip, August 4, 1983; (13) testimony signed by Narcisa V. Madarang, August 8, 1983; (14) testimony signed by Pomposo F. Abaya and Francisca F. Abaya, August 8, 1983; (15) testimony signed by Marita C. Bello, August 8, 1983; (16) testimony signed by Miguel G. Abaya and Ciriaca O. Abaya, August 7, 1983; (17) testimony signed by Eusebia Valdez Abaya, Pedrito V. Abaya and Arnold V. Abaya, August 8, 1983. (Some of the signatures in these testimonies are not quite legible—our apologies to those whose names we may have misspelled.)

- ⁴² See "Before and After" in *The Manila Times*, February 28, 1949.
- ⁴³ Some cures were reported in the newspapers. See for instance "Lipa Petal Is Helping Spanish Girl Recover" in *The Evening Chronicle*, December 8, 1949; "Lipa Miracle Cures Reported Daily To Medics" in *The Evening News*, May 21, 1949.
- ⁴⁴ Documentation on recent reported cures is still being compiled.
- ⁴⁵ "A Message for America," in *The Scapular National Catholic Magazine*, September-October 1949, vol. 8, no. 5, p. 8.
- ⁴⁶ Dr. Genaro F. Vidal, "Calling All Americans!" in *The Scapular National Catholic Magazine*, November-December 1949, vol. 8, no. 6, p. 3.

CHAPTER TEN

Dispersal

- ⁴⁷ See the following articles: "Lipa Convent Warns Against Impostors" in *The Manila Times*, December 31, 1948; "Lipa Racket" in *The Manila Chronicle*, March 20, 1949; "Lipa Pilgrims Get Warning" in *The Evening News*, March 25, 1949.
- ⁴⁸ For an account of Bishop Verzosa's involvement in catechetical work and in the reconstruction of churches, see Fr. Juan S. Coronel, "The Diocese of Lipa: Historical Notes 1910-1960" in *50 Years of the Diocese of Lipa (1910-1960): Golden Jubilee Souvenir*. Also see: *Archdiocese of Lipa, Quinquennial Report, 1985-89* (compiled by Fr. Pio Bagamano, Chancellor, Lipa Diocese).
- ⁴⁹ Claim of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Lipa with the Philippine War Damage Commission (compilation at the Archdiocesan Chancery of Lipa).
- ⁵⁰ Jaro is an island of Iloilo 292 miles (470 km) away from Manila, the country's capital. She stayed there for a total of 8 months then transferred to continue her banishment within the confines of the Carmelite Convent in Gilmore, Manila.

CHAPTER ELEVEN
The Interrogation

⁵¹ *The Evening News*, November 25, 1948.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN
The Verdict

⁵² See Appendix B for the complete text of the church's official statement.

⁵³ See Appendix C for the complete text of Fr. Lorenzo Guerrero's testimony.

⁵⁴ The letter, originally in Italian, was translated for us by Fr. Delfin Paulino Felipe, October 13, 1991.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN
The Clamp-Down

⁵⁵ Ernesto del Rosario, "Off the Beat," in *The Manila Times*, April 1, 1949.

⁵⁶ In the author's opinion, a good example is: Jorge Seurat, "Double Hoax" in *Newsday*, September 14, 1989.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN
Trials and Suffering

⁵⁷ These files can be found at the Archdiocesan Chancery of Lipa.

⁵⁸ See the listing of women religious in the Archdiocese of Lipa in *Archdiocese of Lipa, Quinquennial Report, 1985-1989* (compiled by Fr. Pio Bagamano, Chancellor, Archdiocese of Lipa).

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
And Again . . .

- ⁵⁹ See Josef Künzli, ed., *The Messages of the Lady of All Nations* (Amsterdam: Secretariaat, "Vrouwe van alle Volkeren," 1987; Produced 1987 by Miriam-Verlag).
- ⁶⁰ See: *The Message of Marienfried according to Our Lady's apparitions in 1946* (AMI International Press; imprimatur dated 1970).
- ⁶¹ See: Dante Alimenti, translated by Fr. Peter D. Fehlner, *The Grotto of Tre Fontane*, (Italy: A cura della Provincia Romana dei Frati Conventuali, custodi della Grotta, 1987).
- ⁶² See "Pastoral Letter of the Bishop of Niigata on the Subject of the Statue of the Virgin of Akita, John Shojiro Ito, Bishop of Niigata, 1984," in Teiji Yasuda, O.S.V., English version by John Haffert, *Akita: The Tears and Message of Mary* (New Jersey: John Haffert, 1989), pp. 190-199.
- ⁶³ Josef Künzli, ed., *The Messages of the Lady of All Nations*, pp. 92-93,
- ⁶⁴ Fr. Rene Laurentin, *The Church and Apparitions— Their Status and Function: Criteria and Reception* (Ohio: The Riehle Foundation, June 1989), p. 6.
- ⁶⁵ Wilton Wynn, *Keeper of the Keys*, p. 234.
- ⁶⁶ Laurentin, *The Church and Apparitions*, pp. 6-7.
- ⁶⁷ Josyp Terelya with Michael H. Brown, *Josyp Terelya: Witness to Apparitions and Persecution in the USSR, An Autobiography* (Ohio: Faith Publishing Co. for The Riehle Foundation, 1991), p. 286.



Appendix A

**Original Account
of
the Events at Lipa Carmel, 1948
by
Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D.**

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J.M. J.T.

After much difficulty, on July 4, 1948, the day when she completed her 21 years of age, at 5:00 in the morning, Teresita Castillo was able at last to escape from her paternal home to enter Carmel of Lipa. For fear that her parents would follow her, the doors of Carmel were opened immediately as soon as she arrived, and she was able to hear the Holy Mass already dressed as a Carmelite postulant.

Her two brothers came after her and one of them threatened to kill her with his pistol if she did not return home, but the young postulant was decided to follow her holy vocation and was able to answer with a determined will that she was ready to die because for her, it was a great joy to die in Carmel. Cheerful and contented, she followed the Community Acts but after Compline,

the Mother Prioress dispensed her from assisting at Matins; after such a heavy trial, the poor Sister needed a good rest. Scarcely had she rested when she was awakened by the tooting of the horn of the jeep of her elder brother who demanded with a forceful voice that his sister be allowed to go out. The Mother Prioress calmed the new postulant who pleaded not to abandon her at the mercy of her brother. The latter, on seeing that his shouts were not heard, began to bang the doors so that the Prioress was forced to send word to the authorities to seek protection. Thanks be to God and to the Blessed Mother, before the authorities arrived, the unwanted visitors had left.

The first three weeks of postulancy were passed with great fervor and enthusiasm of a newly-accepted postulant, but aside from this, there was observed in her a firm determination to put efforts to be a perfect Carmelite. All in Carmel was sweet and attractive to her, and like everything else, she did all with love, and all appeared easy for her. Her sister and brothers did not cease to importune her to return to their paternal home for her parents would die of grief. But God gave her courage, and her convincing words proved her determined conviction that it was her will to follow what God had asked of her.

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On July 31 at about 8:15 P.M. while Sister Teresita was praying in her cell, she heard three hard knocks at her door. As it was "Great Silence"; she answered in a low cough as is customary in Carmel. She did not see anyone but heard a man's voice, rather hoarse, who told her: "You will never persevere here because you will always be tempted. It is time that you should follow me for you have done so much already to follow your God. Remember I am Satan. So that you will believe all this is true, I will leave something in your cell." A bad odor was perceived, very disagreeable, before she heard the voice. Sister Teresita, who trembled with fear, had courage to light her lamp and see if there was something new in her cell. She found near her bed a black footprint.

With great fear, she ran hurriedly to the cell of the Mother Prioress, who at the time was writing. She embraced her and cried. Her Reverence tried to console her and encouraged her to be generous and not to look back after she has put her hand to the plough, as she thought the postulant was only homesick and sad due to her separation from her dear ones, and that it was only a temptation of the enemy. "Why, Mother, can the devil speak?" she asked. "The Ass of Balaam spoke," answered the Prioress. She then explained briefly to the Prioress all that happened. The Prioress was incredulous until she said that he left something black in her cell. "Come, Mother, and see it yourself!" Both went to the cell and the Prioress saw the footprint. She was stupefied, and with one finger she touched it. It was horrible soot.

At three o' clock in the morning of the first of August, Sister Teresita awoke the Prioress telling her Reverence: "Mother, did you hear?" "What?" asked the Prioress. "The same voice of last night telling me he will not molest me anymore, but he will do all possible not to make me as a saint." "No," answered the Prioress. "Is someone downstairs? I can hear as though someone is running," said the postulant.

After Mass, the Mother Prioress gave an account of what happened to the Auxiliary Bishop, [in his capacity] as Chaplain of Carmel. His Excellency entered the enclosure to see the footprint, and after having seen it, the Mother Prioress removed it with a piece of cloth. The footprint disappeared, but the cloth was stained with soot.

After the Little Hours, the postulant was called to the parlor and was examined by the Auxiliary Bishop. She was a bit agitated, but not nervous. His Excellency told her not to fear, to use holy water, and to pray much. Afterwards, His Excellency (Auxiliary Bishop) went to Batangas to give an account of it all to His Excellency, Monsignor Verzosa, who counselled that the postulant be given enough care and food, and to sleep well to avoid her being a melancholic. This was fulfilled, and Sister Teresita did not think anymore of the incident.

On August 6, First Friday, on taking the card of the Sacred Heart, Sister Teresita got that of a Victim. On returning to her cell at about 8:00 P.M., she took the card and was about to read it when it escaped her hands as though blown by a strong wind. Afterwards, she heard a voice accompanied by a very disagreeable odor who said: "Sister Teresita, victim of Carmel you will be." She did not see anyone but a great fear encompassed her, so she ran to her Mother Prioress to tell all that had happened. The card of the Sacred Heart was found the next morning thrown in one corner of the cell.

The next day, Saturday, August 7, the Mother Prioress was obliged to go to the Carmel of Manila. At about 3:00 P.M. while Sister Teresita was sewing in her cell, she heard once more the voice of a man who told her: "I came to distract you because you always think of the Virgin Mary. Why do you obey your Mother Prioress? That displeases me very much." "Why do you meddle with my affairs?" answered the postulant. "I came today because your Mother is not here. I shall return for two more Saturdays." This assault lasted for about five minutes, more or less.

At about 5:30 of the same afternoon, while Sister Teresita was going upstairs to go to her cell, she smelled the strong perfume of *azucenas* [white lilies]. The fragrance increased in intensity as she approached her cell. On arriving in her cell, she heard a feminine voice, so sweet, who told her: "My child, sufferings and pains will accompany you until the end of your life," but she saw no one.

On August 11 at about 3:00 A.M. more or less, Sister Teresita was awakened because her bed shook violently. Then she heard the hoarse voice. "I have come today to visit you at this hour because it is the best, as your Mother is sleeping. Your poor parents and brothers are waiting outside. When will you pity them? Why do you love your Mother Prioress?" "Because in loving her, it is Jesus Christ I love," answered the postulant. "I visited you three times but I always failed. Why do you obey the Bishop?" And many other things similar were asked. Then Sister Teresita saw the face of her interlocutor on fire and very furious. She heard

him taking something from her desk, the discipline, wherewith he beat her hands. As usual, she ran precipitately towards her Mother who saw the signs of the discipline on both hands of Sister Teresita.

The next day at about 10:00 A.M., being Saturday, the Community was occupied in the cleaning of the house. On crossing the garden to take water, Sister Teresita saw a rose and said to herself: "Oh, if only I could take that rose and offer it to my Mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary." On arriving in her cell, as she was about to sweep it, she was surprised to see a fresh rose on her prayer book on her bed. And just then she heard the voice of the enemy. "Where did you get that rose? Who gave it to you? Your Mother Prioress is in the parlor, that is why I came now. Why do you love her? I have so many rivals, we will see who will conquer. Why do you love so much your Mother?" "But why do you meddle with my affairs?" Sister Teresita answered while throwing holy water. He ceased for a moment and then [answered] back again: "I will punish you." The postulant felt that he was beating her hands with a cord that left black marks on her hands.

On August 15 at about 3:30 A.M., Sister Teresita saw an ugly face on the wall of her cell. Without looking for a second time, she ran precipitately to her Mother Prioress.

The next day at around 4:30 in the afternoon while sewing in her cell, she heard again the voice of the enemy. "Why did you run to your Mother last night? I wanted to speak to you. I came for three consecutive days and I always failed. That is why I feel I have lost, but only partially. Why do you love your Mother Prioress?" Sister Teresita answered: "Why do you meddle with my affairs?" The enemy got furious and the postulant felt a pinch on her right hand. The nails were imprinted, thus causing it to bleed a little, and it had soot and bad odor.

That same day, the 16th of August at about 8:30 in the evening, Sister Teresita was walking towards her cell when suddenly she felt someone was pulling her back with her two hands and was pushing her towards the small door of the enclosure. Surprised,

she saw that the door was opened very widely, and they were pushing her furiously outside. With great force, she was able to mount the stairs and went up running to the cell of her Mother. Even on the stairs, they impeded her going up. But at last, she was able to reach the cell and with a sudden push, she reached her Mother who was then writing. There were black marks like soot on both hands of the postulant.

On August 18, Wednesday, at 5:30 P.M., while Sister Teresita was going to her cell before going to the garden, she smelled the perfume of the *azucenas*. Upon arriving [in] her cell, she saw a beautiful lady with long hair, some white already. She was dressed in white. She was surprised to see her as she could not understand how she was able to enter her cell, hence, she ran precipitately and was about to leave her when the lady stopped her by holding her by the hand: "*Do not fear, my child,*" and with a gesture, she bade her sit on the chair. The lady sat on the bed and she continued: "*He who loves above all things has sent me. I come with a message. You had a long and difficult battle with your enemies, but they will not molest you from hence unless it be for a last and strong assault. Do not fear and be brave. Your enemy is jealous because you love your Mother Prioress very much. Love her more now. Wash her feet, kiss them, and then drink the water you used for washing afterwards. Tell this message to your Mother, not to anyone else. So that you will believe me, I shall give you two pictures. Give them to your Mother for her to keep; the Community might need them someday. I took them from your prayer book; they are the ones you like best.*" This conversation lasted for about twenty-five minutes more or less; that is, the Lady disappeared five minutes before six.

Sister Teresita said that when it is the enemy who speaks, he does it precipitately as though fearful to be caught, while the Lady speaks sweetly and calmly.

At six, the Angelus bell is rung and after, the Community goes to the Refectory. Immediately after the Supper, Sister Teresita approached her Mother and asked to speak with her in the cell.

Both went up and the postulant told all that had happened. The Mother was doubtful of it all, saying that as she was not sure who the Lady was, she did not permit her to wash her feet, and if the Lady returns, to ask who she is. Both Mother and child went to recreation and to Compline and both forgot about the incident. When Sister Teresita went up to her cell to pray, she found the Lady waiting for her there. Without allowing Sister Teresita to say a word, she said: *"I placed my identity on the table of your Mother. Go to her and tell her that she will find there who I am."*

The postulant obeyed, and she went to the cell of her Mother. She found her Reverence writing, and told her what the lady said. What did she find on her table? The Mother went up after Compline to work, and found on the table the prayer book wherein according to Sister Teresita, the two pictures had disappeared. The Prioress believed that the postulant had placed it there to show where the two pictures had come from, hence, she did not mind it; but Sister Teresita assured her Reverence that she was not the one who placed it there. They understood that the prayer book was the means given by the Lady to make known her identity. Her Reverence opened it and read the title: "Treasury of the Virgin Mary". The Mother did not give importance to it and told the postulant that the book did not reveal who the Lady was, hence, she cannot permit her to wash her feet, nor to kiss it, nor to drink of the water afterwards.

One day, the Lady told Sister Teresita: *"I have some questions to ask you. Why are your parents very opposed to your vocation?"* "They were opposed from the beginning," replied the postulant. *"And you, what do you think of it? You are sad about it?"* "No", answered Sister Teresita, "because that is the will of God for me." *"From now on, whatever new thing you find in your cell, give it to your Mother to keep. I was sent by the One who created you. I go now. Tell all this to your Mother Prioress. Do not fear, tell her though you fear it might hurt her."*

Immediately after the Little Hours of August 19, she gave report to her Mother of all that occurred to her. The Mother Prioress related all to the Auxiliary Bishop, asking His Excellency at the

same [time] if it was permissible to approve what the Lady asks: to wash the feet, etc. His Excellency counselled it is better to exercise great prudence, and better if she could ask for a sign from the Lady to know who she was. On leaving the Parlor, the Mother Prioress stepped on three *azucenas* and on a piece of paper which, according to her, was placed at the door by a postulant whom she saw and who immediately disappeared. She took the flowers and the little paper and she read the following: "*Conform yourself with what your child asks.*" Thinking it was Sister Teresita who brought it on the part of the lady, the Mother showed it to the Bishop. At the beginning of recreation, the Prioress called Sister Teresita and asked what is the meaning of the three *azucenas* and the small paper that she placed at the door of the parlor. Sister Teresita was surprised and said she knew nothing about it. Hence, the Mother Prioress did not question, further awaiting what will happen next.

At about one in the afternoon, Sister Teresita went hurriedly to her Mother who was busy directing the workmen who were constructing the well. She approached her and begged that her Reverence follow her to her cell as she had something to tell her. The Mother noticed that Sister Teresita did not lift her veil that covered her face, though she spoke to her at her cell. "Mother, the lady returned to visit me and without even telling her what your Reverence told me, to ask for a sign, she told me that your Reverence will see the sign in my eyes." The veil was lifted, and the Mother saw that the eyes of Sister Teresita were encircled with fresh blood. The postulant was a bit agitated, and when she was asked why she was fearful, she said that she did not know what was in her eyes. "What do you feel or what did you feel in it?" "When the Lady told me that your Reverence will see the sign in my eyes, I felt as though my tears bedewed my eyes, and now it seems as though it is all wet. The Lady told me that when I go to call for your Reverence, I must not show my face to anyone nor lift my veil, except to your Reverence." "Do your eyes not hurt you?" asked her Mother. "No," answered Sister Teresita, and [she said] that the Lady repeated what she formerly asked: to wash the feet of the Prioress, to kiss them, and to drink the water— and if possible, to do it at three o'clock of that same

afternoon, Thursday, August 19. The washing of the feet is for the salvation of their two souls, that of the Mother Prioress and of Sister Teresita, added the Lady.

At three in the afternoon of that day, the Mother Prioress and Sister Teresita obeyed the Lady's message. At 8:30 in the evening as the postulant was praying in her cell, a nun entered, and thinking it was her Mother Prioress, Sister Teresita knelt. But the voice was that of the Lady! *"Your Mother had an upright decision (that of obeying me). Now that you have given me proof of your humility and your Mother of her simplicity, I can proceed. You two will always be under my mantle."* Afterwards, she gave fresh instructions to Sister Teresita with regards to her great temptation or combat that awaited her. *"It might last the whole day. Tell your Mother to be patient with you that day. I will tell you later why you had to undergo that terrible temptation."*

Sister Teresita slept after Matins. At about 2:30, the Lady who was dressed in sky blue awoke her. Again she gave counsels to Sister Teresita. *"Obey always your Mother not only when she commands you to do something, but even her least desires. Why do you prefer to pray in your cell?"* "Because here I can practice more my faith. In the choir, I know that God is there on the altar, but here, I need faith to believe that He is here," answered Sister Teresita. "How is it, my dear Mother, how is it possible that you who are so holy and blessed come to me who is nothing but dust and ashes and a sinner?" asked Sister Teresita. *"That is what I was waiting to hear from your lips, my dear child,"* answered the Lady.

On August 20 after Mass and before the Little Hours, Sister Teresita was arranging her cell. Suddenly, she saw fall from the wall rose petals that fell on the floor in the form of a cross. In obedience to the Lady, Sister Teresita called her Mother to see the cross. The Mother gathered the petals and she kept them.

The Mother Prioress was asked by Sister Teresita why when the Lady appears, everything disappears in her cell! The Lady is surrounded by a bright light and Sister Teresita sees nothing else around.

On Sunday, August 22, feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, at about 12:30 in the evening began the terrible combat announced by the Lady. Sister Teresita saw herself despoiled of her robe. At about 1:30 more or less, Sister Teresita ran to the cell of her Mother, and for the first time, the enemy followed her. "Mother, pray to the Blessed Virgin to guard my chastity!" The battle was a cruel and hard one, and the Mother Prioress did all that she could to help Sister Teresita. The poor postulant felt they were pulling her hands and her feet; she pressed on her Mother and fought against the enemy. Afterwards, a legion came to assault her, spoke badly of her mother, and laughed at the Bishop, etc., etc. At the end, Sister Teresita said: "I have no eyes to see all your indecencies!" At the sound of the clapper at 4:45 A.M., the enemies fled. Sister Teresita was looking for her Mother! Her eyes were opened but she could not see; she was blind!

The Community was not aware of what was happening to Sister Teresita. The Lady left word not to tell it to anyone except to her Mother. They two alone were to keep the secret. When Sister Teresita got blind, the Mother took care of her as a voice said: "*Have patience with your child. Three days she will be blind for the good of both.*" At 9:50 A.M. of the same day, Sunday, August 22, the Mother received this message: "*Love her much! Two more additional days of blindness for the salvation of her parents and for the beautiful destiny that is awaiting her in the next life. Do not leave your child from three to five P.M. It needs five days of sufferings and blindness for your good and hers. You will owe her much. Remain with her from eight until nine P.M. Give her good food. Love her much until the end! Patience!*"

At 3:00 P.M., the poor, blind postulant felt as though her whole body was filled with large pinpricks that gave her pain throughout. The pain was intermittent, and when the pins pricked her, she racked with pain. At times, she felt as though her back was pinched sharply until the bones. At five, the pains ceased.

At eight in the evening, Sister Teresita had again the pains of the pinpricks of the pins. It lasted until nine o' clock.

The next morning, Sister Teresita heard Mass and afterwards, her Mother brought her to her cell. The Mother went down to take her breakfast. On going up, the Mother received instructions for every day until Friday, August 27. At 2:55 in the afternoon of the same day, the voice said to the Mother that Sister Teresita would recover her sight on September 7.

Sister Teresita suffered morally during the first days of her blindness. She asked her Mother if God did not reveal that she would regain her sight, and if her blindness would not be a motive for the Community to send her out. At times, tears fell from her eyes, and when her Mother asked her the reason for crying, she replied, "Oh, if only I could see my Mother before I die!"

On August 24, Sister Teresita told her Mother that she was grateful for having visited her twice during the night covering her with the blanket, a thing that the Mother Prioress had not done. As it was natural and necessary, Sister Teresita was segregated from the Community and whenever it was possible, her Mother stood by her side. As the Community was not aware of what was happening, God allowed that the Mother and children suffer terribly during this time.

One day, Sister Teresita said: "Oh Mother, how I wish today was Saturday!" "Why?" asked the Mother. "Because your Reverence promised me that on that day you will bring me to the garden and will permit me to cut two flowers, one white for your Reverence, and the other red for me." The Mother was surprised as she has never told her that, but the Mother did not let it be understood by Sister Teresita.

Everyday during her blindness, Sister Teresita was to suffer the pinpricks from three to five in the afternoon, and from eight to nine in the evening. Once, the Mother counted 95 attacks of pinpricks during the three hours.

On Friday, August 27, the pains grew worse and lasted for a longer time. She suffered from 8:30 to 10:00 in the evening, from 11:30 to 2:00, from 3:00 to 5:00, from 8:00 to 9:00 in the evening until midnight! The Mother knew beforehand all these hours of pain as it was announced.

At last came the long sighed for day of Saturday, August 28. As was promised, while the Mother Prioress was in the choir for the Little Hours, "someone" brought Sister Teresita to the garden and made her cut two flowers, one white and the other red. Sister Teresita was in full belief that it was the Mother Prioress who brought her to the garden! When the Mother Prioress went up to the cell after the Little Hours, she found two flowers on the table and many petals of roses scattered over the bed where Sister Teresita was, and also on the floor.

On August 30th after supper when the Mother led Sister Teresita to her stool to attend recreation, as she was about to sit, she immediately jumped and told her Mother: "Someone is on the chair!" The Mother did not see anyone. Afterwards, Sister Teresita directed herself towards the invisible person (it was invisible to both as Sister Teresita was still blind). It was the voice of the Lady, and a conversation ensued between the two. The Mother could hear Sister Teresita but not the other one. The recreation lasted for an hour but before leaving, the Lady allowed Sister Teresita to kiss her feet.

The next day, Sister Teresita passed her recreation hearing the canticle of the angels. Once telling her Mother, she recalled the following verses:

Now we shall not remain for long
That is why we shall sing a beautiful song
To our very dear little friend
Who with us will be in heaven.

She loves tenderly Our Lord
So with His Mother, the Virgin Mary.
Not all that she asks will be granted
Because they will be delicately selected.

On September first at noon, the Lady came again. Sister Teresita heard her voice but she doubted if she came from heaven or from the enemy, as she asked several times who she was and received no response. To test it, Sister Teresita pronounced the Holy Name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lady answered: "*I love that name very much.*" Hence, the postulant once more asked who was the Lady. "If you do not like to give me your name, at least tell me the first letter of it," insisted Sister Teresita. "*I will give you three letters, not only one.*" And immediately after the Angelus at noon, the Lady said: "*I am B. V. M.*" (BLESSED VIRGIN MARY)

On the First Friday of September, Sister Teresita suffered much. The pinpricks were often, but the Mother Prioress was consoled greatly as she heard the voice repeating that Sister Teresita would recover her sight on the seventh when her Mother Prioress kisses her eyes.

The next day, Saturday, September 4, at five in the afternoon, a little more or less after Sister Teresita kissed the feet of the Crucifix, she heard a sweet voice that told her: "*You will always be my daughter so suffer much for me.*" On Sunday at three of that day, the Mother learned that the postulant would have additional pains for the salvation of a sinner, and so it was fulfilled.

The next morning after the Little Hours, the Mother and Sister Teresita went to the Parlor to greet His Excellency, the Auxiliary Bishop, and in his presence, the Mother kissed the eyes of the postulant and immediately after the act, she recovered her sight.

On September 9 at five in the afternoon, Sister Teresita fell in a trance and saw herself walking in a path filled with thorns and thistles. After a short distance, they disappeared (the thorns) and she went up a stairway covered with roses. Angels were on both sides and on arriving on top, she found a multitude of angels and saints who smiled at her.

On September 11, Sister Teresita saw a beautiful bluebird in the garden. She noted that it flew towards the *jazmin* (jasmine), took a flower, and carried it on its beak. She went up to her cell and was greatly surprised when she saw the bird enter through the window and leave the little flower at the feet of the image of our Blessed Virgin.

In the afternoon of that same day, Sister Teresita had a trance and she saw a very beautiful garden. The Lady was taking a walk by her side. In the garden there were many beautiful flowers and many birds of different colors and among them, she saw some like the bluebird. In the middle of the garden there was a fount, and in the center was the statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The water, red, flowed from the pierced side of the Heart. The Lady and Sister Teresita sat at the border of the fount.

The Lady gave counsel to Sister Teresita: to be good, obedient, humble and simple. "Why, Mother dear, yesterday when I saw you in the *sala* you did not tell me anything?" queried Sister Teresita. "*Because I had no permission,*" answered the Lady. "How is that? You who are the Mother of God, do you still need permission?" answered Sister Teresita. "*Yes, my child, it is true I am His Mother, but my Son is God, King, and Lord of all creatures, that is why I have to obey Him,*" answered the Lady. Then she added: "*When your Mother is perplexed and does not know what to do, tell her to pray one Ave Maria and I will help her.*"

THE APPARITIONS

On September 12, Sunday, feast of the Holy Name of Mary at about five in the afternoon, Sister Teresita went to the garden to take a walk as was counselled by her Mother. She went towards the *jazmin* to see where the bird had taken the flower. On arriving nearby, she noted that a vine was moving, and as there was no wind, she was surprised very much and she approached it. She heard the voice of the Lady who told her: "*Do not fear, my child! Kiss the ground. All that I tell you, you must obey. For*

fifteen consecutive days, come to visit me in this spot. Eat a little grass, my child." Sister Teresita told her mother all that had happened and she asked permission to obey the Lady.

Having obtained permission, the following day at the same hour, Sister Teresita returned to the same place of the garden. She knelt and began to say the Ave Maria. On reaching the words "full of grace", the vine moved, and suddenly appeared before her eyes a very beautiful Lady with her hands clasped on her breast with a golden rosary hanging from her right hand. She was a bit inclined. Her dress was very white, very simple, and around her cincture a narrow belt was tied. Her bare feet were resting on clouds about two feet from the ground. She was radiant with beauty, and was smiling. "Be faithful to come here in this place even if it is raining," she told Sister Teresita. The postulant asked: "Beautiful Lady, who are you?" "*I am your Mother, my little one,*" and having said it, she disappeared.

On Tuesday, September 14 at 5:15 in the afternoon, Sister Teresita returned to the place. The Lady was already there waiting for her. Her arms extended as though desiring to embrace her little one with a maternal embrace. "*I would like this place to be blessed tomorrow,*" she said. "At what time, my Mother?" answered Sister Teresita. "*At the hour that your Mother Prioress likes, my child,*" said the Lady, "*I prohibit you to forget the incidents of these fifteen days,*" and blessing the postulant, the Lady disappeared.

The next day, the Mother received instructions about the blessing of that part of the garden. The Chaplain of Carmel, His Excellency, Monsignor Alfredo Ma. Obviar, was to enter to bless it and that the Community should be present. The Lady said she had a message for the Community. In the instructions to the Mother Prioress, it is said that the Bishop and the Community had to cast down their eyes, and that after the blessing, the Bishop should preach to the Sisters about the message of the Lady. During the preaching, the Mother should not separate herself from Sister Teresita, because according to the instructions, she would faint and would not be able to breath so that the

Community may see how much she is suffering. All these instructions and other things that the Mother gathered and received were unknown to the postulant; she was not aware about it, and many times when her Mother seemed to anticipate what was going to happen, she gets very surprised.

The blessing of the nook was done at 3:20 in the afternoon of September 15. The Auxiliary Bishop went with rochette and stole, and the Community followed to the place. On arriving at the place, Sister Teresita saw the Lady with extended arms as though desiring to embrace all with her maternal embrace. As soon as Sister Teresita knelt before her, she said: *"My child, kiss the ground and eat a little grass. Take paper and pencil and write down what I will tell you for the Community."*

The following is her message:

"My daughters:

- 1. I ask you to believe in Me and to guard this as a deep secret among yourselves until I tell you to do otherwise.*
- 2. Love one another as true Sisters.*
- 3. Come frequently to visit me in this place. Love much your Mother Prioress. Your little Sister is suffering much, but no one knows except your Mother. Do not envy your little Sister because she suffers much. All these are only for my daughters in Carmel, not for people outside, that is why I prevent you to tell this to anyone. Make this a sacred place and gather the petals, my children. Respect this place. I would like this Carmel to be called Carmel of Our Lady. I bless the whole Community."*

And looking towards her little one, she added, *"Eat a little grass and ground, my child."* After this, the Lady disappeared.

At five of that afternoon, Sister Teresita returned to the place of the apparition, and the Lady was already there waiting.

"My child, I have many things to tell you." "Do you permit me to write them, my Mother?" asked Sister Teresita. With permission, Sister Teresita wrote her words.

"I will ask something from Carmel. I would like a statue of mine to be placed here, to clean this part of your garden so that it will be a real place of prayer. You do not need to tell me all that your Sisters are asking because I know them already. Tell them they have to believe, or else they will lose grace. I shall bless the Community always, my child."

On the 16th, the Lady said:

"My little one, you suffered much last night because two of my daughters are not pleased to have me here. They were doubting and do not like to believe. I would like my statue to be placed in this place. I would like you to describe me to your Chaplain because I want the statue to be as you see me, and as big as the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes that is in the cloister. Tell your Mother Prioress to say the rosary here with the Community everyday in the afternoon during these days. On the 7th of October, I would like a Mass to be said here in my honor, and if possible, that the statue be here on that day. Give to all my daughters my motherly love. Tell them that I love all my daughters in the Carmel of Lipa, that I will always be with you all."

The next day, the 17th, the following message was given by the Lady:

"My dear daughters:

I ask you to kneel before your Mother and ask her pardon for the many bad thoughts you had of her for the care she has bestowed on my little one.

My child, tell your Mother to permit you to recount some incidents that happened to you to your dear Sisters because they would like to know something more. I can read it from their hearts.

One of my daughters is still doubting. She must believe if she desires to obtain peace of soul and for the love of my Son, Jesus Christ."

On the eighteenth, the Lady did not appear. Sister Teresita only heard her voice that said:

"I am very sad. My Son Jesus Christ gave to each one of you a free will. I can not force you to believe. I only told you to believe because I love you and I would not like you to lose graces. Take care of the temptations of the devil. Time will come when you will be able to reveal all these to your confessors and to your parents."

On the 19th, the Lady appeared. Her words were:

"I was very much consoled by your tears and your compassionate hearts, my dear daughters. I hope you will always share my sorrows and my joys. Take care of the devils, my dear daughters. Tell me if what I ask is difficult to give.

My children who believe in me, do not refuse graces that are offered to you.

My daughter, do not tempt my children who believe in me. If what I ask you is difficult, then this is what I ask of you: do not tempt, child. My little one, your sister is well and has no physical defect, that is why, child, think it over and reflect. Time will come when you will see all clearly. I know that you are still in darkness. I do not oblige you to believe, my child."

On the 20th, the Lady appeared but she did not give any message to her little one.

On the 21st, the following were her words:

*"Pray, pray, pray for a soul, my dear daughters! I ask you to honor me on Saturdays especially in the following devotions:**

1. *Our Lady of Mount Carmel*
2. *Our Lady of the Snow*
3. *Our Lady of the Holy Rosary*
4. *Our Lady of Perpetual Help*
5. *Immaculate Heart of Mary*
6. *Our Lady of the Abandoned and Refuge of Sinners*
7. *Our Lady of Lourdes*
8. *Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage*
9. *Our Lady of Good Counsel*
10. *Holy Name of Mary*
11. *Our Lady of Loretto*
12. *Our Lady of Remedy*
13. *The Seven Dolors*

I give you my blessing and motherly love to my dear daughters.

To my daughter who do does not believe in me, I do not oblige you to believe, child. However, it is enough for you and for me, and it will not be disagreeable for me if you do not believe. But do not laugh at nor despise my sacred place and my words which really come from my heart, child. I know the place does not please you, nor do you wish to hear my message, but you are obliged by obedience, child. That is why your incredulity is enough, child. Do not despise my sacred place nor my words. This may be my last message for you. My message for the Community everyday is for you all, child. But I do not oblige you to hear nor to obey it if you do not like because you have your free will.

My daughters, I leave you my motherly love and my blessing."

On the 22nd, the message that Sister Teresita received was directed to the Mother Prioress:

*Opposite each title above are scribbled, in Mother Cecilia's handwriting, the names of the different members of the community. She was apparently assigning to each one a devotion to Mary under a particular title.

"My dear daughter,

You will find on your table a note that you will read to the Community. I do not like my little one to hear it, if possible. Receive my motherly blessing."

The Mother found the following note on her table:

"Your little Sister will be blind again on October 7. Have patience with her; do not envy her because aside from her blindness, she will have yet to suffer terribly which your Mother only knows. Pray for her to have patience. Her sufferings and sight are necessary for the salvation of souls."

On the 23rd, this was the message of the Lady:

"Beloved daughters of mine:

I blessed your rosaries and I hope you will always be faithful to use it. I heard your conversation during recreation and really I ask you all to be humble and simple. I love much these two virtues, and that is why you, too, should love it. I love sincerely all of you, and so I shall always speak to you as a mother.

My child, tell your Mother to decide it herself as she is the Prioress. I shall be with her."

On the 24th the Lady said: *"My child, you do not need to tell me all that my dear daughters are asking because I know them already."* Afterwards, she gave some particular message to the Sisters. At the end she said: *"Receive my motherly love and my blessing for all, dear daughters of mine. Be all very good."*

On the 25th, the Lady told the following: *"I wish you all to consecrate yourselves to me on October 7 and be my slaves."*

On the 26th, Sunday, the last of the fifteen days that she asked, the Lady appeared at the usual hour and repeated to her little one her motherly counsels.

"My child, you have to obey and love always your Mother Prioress. Tell your Sisters to love one another as true sisters, to be humble and simple because humility and simplicity are the two virtues I love most. Tell them to love and obey their Superiors and not to forget the things that I ask. I would like a Mass to be said here every 12th of the month if that is possible. I do not ask high things from you as you all believe because you are my little ones. Do not forget to consecrate your selves to me on October 7. Be very good. I am MARY, MEDIATRIX OF ALL GRACE. I will bless the Community morning and evening."

On the 30th of September, petals were showered in the cells of the nuns. On the first of October, First Friday, Sister Teresita suffered much the whole day; pinpricks of pins were felt throughout her body, and suffocation.

On October 3rd after Holy Mass, as Sister Teresita was going to her cell, she perceived a strong perfume of roses at the feet of the stairs, and suddenly, without seeing the hand that was scattering them, she saw petals that fell on the steps of the stairs before her. The invisible hand scattered it until the cell. Sister Teresita got frightened as she saw no one, hence she ran rapidly to her Mother and she told all. The Mother followed her and she saw the petals. She called the Sisters leaving Sister Teresita in the cell.

When the Community arrived, they saw Sister Teresita kneeling in her cell conversing with someone invisible to the rest. After a short time, Sister Teresita made the sign of the cross and kissed the floor. The Mother asked her with whom she was speaking, and the postulant simply told it was Our Lady and Saint Teresita who came to visit her to greet her for her feast. After breakfast which Sister Teresita had to take as she was a postulant, being alone with her Mother, the postulant was surrounded by thirty little angels who greeted her with their trumpets and songs, it being her feast day.

At last came the 7th of October, feast of the Most Holy Rosary. The Mass was said in the hermitage of the Apparitions by the Chaplain of Carmel, Monsignor Alfredo Ma. Obviar. There

were no other persons (from outside) besides him. Before Mass, His Excellency told Sister Teresita to ask from the Blessed Virgin a sign by which he may believe that she, the Virgin, was present in the hermitage. After Mass, the Community made their Act of Consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary, according to the spirit of Saint Grignon de Monfort. After, Sister Teresita made one step forward and spoke to a person invisible to the rest. After a while, she made the sign of the cross three times, she stood up with the head slightly inclined, and then reclined towards the Mother Prioress who was by her side. "Mother, the Lady, after speaking to me, made the sign of the cross on each of my eyes and now I can see no more. She told me that my blindness is the sign for our Chaplain to believe that she is here." On leaving the hermitage, Sister Teresita could not walk by herself; she was touching the place as she walked, hence, the Mother had to guide her until her cell. At the same time, her left arm was paralyzed.

On the eve of the Maternity of Our Lady, 10th of October, petals were showered in the choir at the feet of the statue of Our Holy Mother Saint Teresa. On the 13th after Mass, the Mother heard a voice that said: "*Before the Little Hours, kiss the eyes of your child and she will recover her sight. Now is the 13th, the day of my first apparition, and in honor of this I shall return the sight of your child.*" The left arm was restored, too.

On the 15th of October, feast of Saint Teresa of Jesus, second Patroness of the Carmel of Lipa, petals were showered in the hermitage of the Apparitions and on reaching the floor, they fell in the form of a cross.

On the 24th of October, there was an Investiture in Carmel. On the early morning of this day, the fortunate novice found petals scattered in her cell.

The next day, the Mother received a notice by a voice that Sister Teresita, by the ardent love she had for Jesus and Mary, would lose her senses several times during the day. That same night, Sister Teresita saw the Hearts of Jesus and Mary burning with flames of love and in the middle, she saw her little heart that burned, likewise, pressed between the two Hearts.

On the 27th after Mass, Sister Teresita fell unconscious. She felt a terrible heat in her heart, and said to her Mother that it was as though she had a stove on her breast, and felt her heart burning. Before coming back to her senses, she saw the Immaculate Heart of Mary pierced with a sword. After the Holy Rosary in the afternoon of the same day, Sister Teresita lost once more her senses, and in the midst of her sufferings due to the burning heat that encompassed her breast, she saw the Immaculate Heart of Mary with only six swords and her own pierced by one.

On the 26th, she passed a whole sleepless night. In the middle of the night, she saw her heart pierced by seven lances, and on the seventh there was a small paper that said: "That you may suffer more for Jesus, leave your Carmel!" The mere thought of leaving her beloved Convent was as a sword that traversed her heart. Her Mother understood that this thought was a moral suffering that was most pleasing! But without waiting longer, another message was received which said: "That is possible. If you do not receive another, advise send her out on the 13th of November." The sorrows of Mother and child could well be understood!

On the afternoon of the 28th at 4:30, Sister Teresita fell unconscious. During the three hours, she suffered 33 attacks of intense physical pain as though her breast was burning and her heart aflame. She also suffered actually with the thought that she had to go back to the world which persecuted her incessantly. Before recovering herself, the Blessed Virgin consoled her, telling her to ask the Sisters to pray much because there will be persecution, and to pray much for priests.

In the following days, Sister Teresita suffered unconsciousness, etc. On the 2nd of November after one of her attacks (unconsciousness), she saw innumerable souls who, with Saint Peter at the head, left the fires of Purgatory and went up to heaven. Saint Peter had keys and a cock.

On First Friday, November 5, Sister Teresita was dismayed two or three minutes before 12:00 at noon. Exactly at 12:00, she began to suffer the suffering of Our Lord on the Cross. The Mother and

a Sister were the only ones who were present at this first time. They could easily follow the Seven Last Words. The postulant was with extended arms and her feet crossed as if crucified. On the First Word, Sister Teresita looked heavenwards and she moved her head from one side to the other: "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." At intervals between the words, Sister Teresita rocked from one side to another, but her hands and feet remained fixed in their original position. The Mother and the Sister present tried to move and redouble her extended arms and to move her feet from the other, but it was impossible! They were rigid and heavy that it was not possible to change the position. On the Second Word, Sister Teresita turned her face towards the right side and she smiled. At the Third Word, she looked downward on one side and then to the other. The pains of thirst lasted about seven minutes more or less. The tongue went out of the mouth and the lips seemed to be white with thirst. The taste of the gall and vinegar was depicted on her countenance as though it were something sour and bitter. The Fifth Word, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsake Me?" was depicted with the movements of the head, and the expression of the countenance was as though she was on the lookout for someone very dear. The Sixth, she lifted her head and eyes heavenwards with an expression of satisfaction: "All is consummated." Then began the death rattle. She could not breathe, the throat sounded as those of the agonizing, the head moved from one side to the other. The knees were raised somewhat, which gave the impression that the body hanging on the two nails of the hands was being pulled down by its own weight while the feet remained fixed (nailed); the knees were recollected a little. At exactly three o' clock, after a brief look heavenwards, Sister Teresita reclined her head towards the right side and she remained quiet! After a short while, she was again conscious. Her limbs and bones pained as though after a quarrel. The Mother asked what she felt during those three hours. Sister Teresita answered that she neither saw nor heard those around her, but she felt really all the pains as though crucified on the cross.

At six in the afternoon of the same day, Sister Teresita was once more unconscious. The Mother, while speaking with her, mentioned the love of Jesus for souls and this made her lose consciousness. Afterwards, the Mother heard the voice that told her to call the Community. When the Sisters arrived, they witnessed the Crucifixion briefly as within an hour, the postulant passed all the dolors of Our Lord on the Cross.

On the 7th of November, Sunday, Sister Teresita was visited by her family. Since her entrance in Carmel, they always pleaded with sighs and prayers for her return to their paternal home. This same day, her parents, with tears and on their knees, begged her to have pity on them and not to leave them so alone. As it was not yet possible to reveal the secret, Sister Teresita could not tell anything to her parents of what was happening in Carmel, that is why she had great difficulty to convince them to allow her at least to finish her postulancy, and that she would think it over and pray much to know what was the will of God. After all, she was still on probation, and the little note with the terrifying message could not be erased from her mind! Sister Teresita and the Mother Prioress remained for a while in the parlor. Sister Teresita lost consciousness and incidentally, an Out-Sister was on the other side of the grille. The Mother called and gave an order to call the Chaplain, who just finished the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, so that His Excellency, with the four Out-Sisters, could please be present at the parlor. When the five arrived, Sister Teresita was already in cross-form! The Crucifixion lasted for an hour, more or less.

At last came the 9th of November, the day when the Carmel in the Philippines celebrated its Silver Jubilee. Early in the morning after Mass, the Sisters found rose petals scattered at the feet of Our Lady of Fatima. The Mother heard the voice that said that as a gift for the Silver Jubilee of the Carmel, Sister Teresita would no longer leave, and that the Blessed Virgin gave to all her motherly blessing. She repeated that we be all good, humble, obedient and simple, and to love one another.

The next day during the Little Hours, Sister Teresita fainted and had the sufferings which lasted for three hours. At about five in the afternoon, petals were showered outside of the Monastery, at the entrance of the former provisional chapel. Some persons saw it. The Postulant suffered the Crucifixion between 6 and 7 P.M.

On Thursday, November 12, a Mass was celebrated at the Hermitage of the Apparitions. The Community alone was present. After the Mass, Sister Teresita heard a voice of an Angel that said that the Blessed Virgin was waiting for her in the place of the Apparitions. The postulant stood up and she approached the vine. There was the Lady waiting, radiant with light but somewhat sad. *"People do not believe my words. Pray, my child, pray much because there will be persecution. Pray for priests. What I ask here is exactly what I asked at Fatima. Tell this to the Bishop and to the people. They do not like to believe in me and do not give what I ask. Tell the Sisters that I ask them to pray and to help propagate my devotion, to do penance for those who do not believe. When people come to ask for graces and to pray and ask for blessings, tell them to ask me directly and not through you. All these can be revealed already. This is my last Apparition in this spot."* And blessing Sister Teresita and the Community, Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace disappeared.

L.D.V.M.

Appendix B

The Verdict

We, the undersigned Archbishops and Bishops, constituting for the purpose a special Commission, having attentively examined and reviewed the evidence and testimonies collected in the course of repeated, long and careful investigations, have reached the unanimous conclusion and hereby officially declare that the above mentioned evidence and testimonies exclude any supernatural intervention in the reported extraordinary happenings—including the shower of petals—at the Carmel of Lipa.

Manila, April 11, 1951

(Signed) Gabriel M. Reyes
Archbishop of Manila

(Signed) Cesar M. Guerrero
Bishop of San Fernando

(Signed) Mariano Madriaga
Bishop of Lingayen

(Signed) Juan Sison
Auxiliary Bishop
of Nueva Segovia

(Signed) Rufino Santos
Apostolic Administrator
of Lipa

(Signed) Vicente Reyes
Auxiliary Bishop of Manila

Manila, 11 April 1951*
Concordat cum originali:
(Signed) Egidio Vagnozzi
Apostolic Nuncio

Diocese of Lipa
Lipa City, Philippines

Decree

Having been declared by the Special Commission composed of several members of the Philippine Hierarchy that, after long, repeated and careful investigations, the evidences and testimonies on the matter exclude any supernatural intervention in the reported extraordinary happenings—including the shower of petals—at the Carmel of Lipa, I, the undersigned Apostolic Administrator of Lipa Diocese, in keeping with the Decree-Statement of the said Episcopal Commission, BY THESE PRESENT LETTERS dispose and order:

- 1) No petals nor water should be given out to anyone;
- 2) The statue of Our Lady (actually in the church) should be retired from public veneration;
- 3) All out-sisters must be admitted within the enclosure for the time being, excepting Sr. Elizabeth, who shall remain outside to attend to the needs of the Community; and finally
- 4) All visits are suspended temporarily, no letters will be allowed, until final decision on the matter will come from the Holy See.

City of Lipa, April 12, 1951

Signed:
Rufino J. Santos, D.D.
Apostolic Administrator
Sede Vacante

** We have two copies of this pronouncement, one dated April 6, 1951, and another dated April 11, 1951. Due to the length of time which has elapsed, we have no way of verifying which is the original date. We have reproduced the latter version as it contains the signature of Monsignor Egidio Vagnozzi. The two copies, however, are identical in text, except for the date. The following document was issued by Monsignor Rufino Santos, shortly after the pronouncement was made.*

Appendix C

Testimony of Fr. Lorenzo Ma. Guerrero, S.J.

AFFIDAVIT

I, Fr. Lorenzo Ma. Guerrero, S.J., of legal age, residing in Sta. Ana Manila, after being sworn to upon oath, depose and state:

1. That the Philippines Catholic Hierarchy issued the following Official Statement in the year 1951:

“We, the undersigned Archbishop and Bishops, constituting for the purpose a special commission, having attentively examined and reviewed the evidence and testimonies collected in the course of repeated, long and careful investigations, have reached the unanimous conclusion and hereby officially declare the above-mentioned evidence and testimonies exclude any supernatural intervention in the reported extraordinary happening, including the showers of petals at the Carmel of Lipa.”

Manila, April 6, 1951

(Signed) Gabriel M. Reyes — Archbishop of Manila
(Signed) Cesar M. Guerrero — Bishop of San Fernando
(Signed) Mariano Madriaga — Bishop of Lingayen
(Signed) Rufino Santos — Apostolic Administrator of Lipa
(Signed) Juan Sison — Auxiliary Bishop of Nueva Segovia
(Signed) Vicente P. Reyes — Auxiliary Bishop of Manila

2. That while my uncle, Bishop Cesar Guerrero, was still alive, I heard from his lips that he signed the above Official Statement under duress.

3. That the said Bishop had expressed his personal belief in the fact of the apparitions of Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace in the Carmelite Convent of Lipa during the year of 1948.

In witness whereof, I hereunto sign this sworn statement this 11th day of February, 1990 in the City of Manila, Philippines.

(Signed) Lorenzo Ma. Guerrero, S.J.

Witnesses:

H. Mandadero

Amelia Kison

Appendix D

Selected Newspaper and Magazine Articles on the Events at Carmel, Lipa

Local Publications 1948-1951

Bagong Sampaguita

"Ang Himala ng Rosas sa Lipa, Batangas" — January 1, 1949

Daily Mirror

"Mark First Lipa Miracle Anniversary with Masses" —
September 12, 1949

Evening Chronicle

"Legal Savant Thinks Lipa Roses Mystery Not Miracle" —
November 25, 1948

"Vision Of Our Lady Appears In Sky Above Sampaloc Lake"
— June 2, 1949

"Lipa Petal Is Helping Spanish Girl Recover" — December
8, 1949

The Evening News

"Froth n' Frippery" (column by Rosario Querol) — January
28, 1949

"Lipa Pilgrims Get Warning" — March 25, 1949

"Lipa Miracles" (part of column called "The Tao Speaks") —
April 11, 1949

"Lipa Rose Petal Heals Child's Skull" — May 21, 1949, pp.
14, 16

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April 11, 1949

"Lipa Rose Petal Heals Child's Skull" — May 21, 1949, pp.
14, 16

- "Miracle Shower Keeps Drawing More Crowds" — November 24, 1948
- "Army of Pilgrims Throngs Lipa To Witness Miracle Of Roses" — November 29, 1948
- "The Miracles of Lipa" — December 13, 1948
- "Lipa Convent Warns Against Impostors" — December 31, 1948
- "Rose Shower Recurs In Lipa" — January 3, 1949
- "Catholic Pilgrims See Petal Shower" — January 10, 1949
- "Chief Justice and Noted Scientist Convinced Petal Shower A Miracle" — January 24, 1949
- "Record Crowd Sees Lipa Miracle" — February 13, 1949
- "Before and After (small ad on cure of cripple Dominga Arellano) — February 28, 1949
- "Young Lipa Pilgrim Dies in Road Mishap" — March 6, 1949
- "Pilgrimage to Lipa" — March 17, 1949
- "More Miracles at Lipa Shrine" — March 18, 1949
- "Off the Beat" (column by Ernesto del Rosario) — April 1, 1949
- "Worshippers See Miracle Images At Lipa Shrine" — April 16, 1949
- "Special Novena Proposed for Lady Mediatrix of All Graces" — May 7, 1949
- "Lipa—Inspired Phenomenon In Sampaloc Draws City Crowds" — May 11, 1949
- "Redemptorists Deny Report Of Lipa Novitiate's Death" — September 12, 1949
- "Petals No Miracle: Prelates Officially Deny Supernatural Action In Lipa" — April 14, 1951

Philippine Trends

- "The Roses of Lipa" — December 1948

Sentinel

- Author, "Will Lipa Become New Lourdes? Miraculous Apparitions Claimed At Carmelite Convent" (Reuters press release) — no date indicated.

Semana

Francisco Villanueva Jr., "Los Milagros de la Santissima Virgen de Lipa" — January 13, 1949, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 5-10

Sunday Times

"Teresa's Parents Pay Convent Visit" — January 30, 1949
"Petal Shower Stages Big Show" — February 27, 1949
"More Miracles" — March 27, 1949

The Varsitarian Magazine

"On Such A Night Was Glory" — March 2, 1949

This Week

"Apparition In A Carmelite Nunnery" — December 12, 1948

Local Publications

1980-1990

Afternoon Headline

"Church has no definite assessment of miracle" — February 27, 1990, p. 1, 2

Sunday Plus (A Chronicle Magazine)

Josephine A. Pasricha, "Re-opening Lipa Miracle",
— September 3, 1989, pp. 19-20

Newsday

Jorge Seurat, "Double Hoax" (in column entitled "Triptych")
— September 14, 1989

People's Journal Tonight

"Lipa Miracle Linked to Ninoy, Edsa" — February 26, 1990
"Lipa Man Healed" — February 26, 1990

Philippine Panorama (Sunday Magazine of the Bulletin Today)

Monsignor Francisco Avendano, "Mrs. Quezon and the Rose Petals of Lipa" — May 20, 1984, vol. 13, no. 20, pp. 32-34

Maricor T. de Villa, "Miracle of the Roses: Lipa Revisited"—
April 22, 1984, vol. 13, no. 15, pp. 28-33

Week-End (Magazine of the Sunday Express)

Corazon C. Fiel, "Oh, Those Wild and Crazy Hoaxes!"—
December 26, 1982, vol. 2, no. 35, pp. 16-20

International Publications

1949-1951

Allez A Marie

"Des roses tombent du ciel" — May 1949

St. Anthony's Messenger

Stanley Meyer, "Mary Visits Lipa" — March 1950, pp. 16-17

The Little Flower Magazine

"Our Beloved Mother of God At Lipa" — June 1949, p. 14

The Scapular National Catholic Magazine

"A Message for America" — September-October 1949, vol. 8,
no. 5, p. 8

Dr. Genaro F. Vidal, "Calling All Americans!" — November-December 1949, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 2-4

"Operation Lipa ... and more about medals" — November-December 1949,
vol. 8, no. 6, p. 4

"Voice of Fatima" — November-December 1949, vol. 8., no.
6, p. 7, 12

Stephen Breen, "Action Now" — November-December
1949, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 9, 10

Stephen Breen, "To Win A World! Lipa Lectures" — November-December 1949, vol. 8, no. 6, pp. 16-17

"Another Letter From Lipa" — November-December 1949,
vol. 8, no. 6, p. 13

Stephen Breen, "Signs in the Sun" — January-February 1950,
vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 2-4, 10-11

Stephen Breen, "Watching and Waiting" — July-August
1950, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 3,4,6

Stephen P. Breen, Jr., "Around the World With The Editor"
— September-October 1950, vol. 9, no. 5, pp. 2, 17,
18.

Mount Carmel Magazine

Fr. Patrick, O.C.D., "Lipa, At Last I, Too, Have Seen" —
July–August 1949, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 15–17.

"The Appearance of Our Lady Of Lipa Over Sampaloc
Lake" — July–August 1949, vol. 24, no. 4, p. 18

Queen Of All Hearts

"Lipa Annex: A Reason Why" — May 1950, vol. 1, no. 1, pp.
8–9

Appendix E

List of People Interviewed for LIPA, 1989-1991

KEVIN ARANZA — one of six boys who witnessed the statue of Our Lady of Carmel at Lipa come to life in 1991

FELIX BAUTISTA JR. — publisher, journalist, and former Press Undersecretary under President Corazon Aquino's administration

TERESITA CASTILLO — visionary of Lipa

ARISTOTLE CASTRO — one of six boys who witnessed the statue of Our Lady of Carmel at Lipa come to life in 1991

LALYN CASTRO — witness to 1948 petal showers

FR. JUAN S. CORONEL — Chancellor of the Diocese of Lipa in 1948

DELFIN DAYOT — one of six boys who witnessed the statue of Our Lady of Carmel at Lipa come to life in 1991

DELY DIONISIO — one of many who kept petals for the 1948 showers

SOCORRO MENDOZA DICHOSO — was cured as a baby by a Lipa petal

DANNY DOLOR — Chairman, Batangas Cultural and Historical Commission

DR. MARIA DOLORES DE LEON — Clinical Psychologist, member of commission tasked with investigating paranormal phenomena for the Church

FRANCISCO DYCHANGCO — heads the Marian Research Center

FR. SENEN ENCARNACION — Parish Priest Emeritus, La Resurreccion Parish, Laguna

FR. ESPINAS — former private secretary to Monsignor Egidio Vagnozzi, interviewed in Rome in 1991

FR. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P. — former Provincial Archivist at the University of Santo Tomas

HIS EXCELLENCY MARIANO GAVIOLA — Archbishop of the Diocese of Lipa

NIEVES GONZALEZ-GABUCAN — saw vision of Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace, in Cagayan de Oro

MANUEL GEMINO — driver of Teresing Castillo

FR. LORENZO MARIA GUERRERO, S.J. — headed the Apostleship of Prayer for 29 years; also headed the Philippine Chapter of the Marian Movement of Priests

GODOFREDO M. JULIANO — Retired General, Philippine Air Force, Fernando Air Base

AMELIA KISON — member, Marian Research Center

ERIC LATARDE — one of six boys who witnessed the statue of Our Lady of Carmel at Lipa come to life in 1991

CANON RENE LAURENTIN — Vatican Expert, Mariology

DOLORES LEIDO — witness to 1948 petal showers

ATTY. ANTONIO MANGUIAT — Consul to Malaysia

BELEN TOLENTINO MAYO — witness to 1948 petal showers

LUISA MAYO — witness to 1948 petal showers and other supposedly supernatural events

VICENTE A. MAYO — Governor, Batangas Province

ARMANDO MENDOZA JR. — Baranggay Captain, Granja, Lipa

LUTGARDA CUNA MENDOZA — sister of Mother Mary Anne Cuna, O.C.D., who was formerly at Lipa Carmel

ROSARIO COSME MENDOZA — mother of Socorro Mendoza Dichoso

GUILLERMO MILAN — witness to 1948 petal showers; husband of Mrs. Severina Milan

MRS. SEVERINA MILAN — former Sr. Stephanie of the Cross, O.C.D., at Lipa Carmel

MOTHER JACINTA OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL, O.C.D.— Prioress, Lipa Carmel

MOTHER MARY OF THE IMMACULATE HEART, O.C.D. — former Prioress at Lipa Carmel

MOTHER MARY MARGARET OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D.— former Prioress, Angeles Carmel

MOTHER MARY THERESE OF THE HOLY FACE, H.F.J. — former Sister Therese of Lipa Carmel

LUZ PALMARES — mother of Raymond Julius Palmares

RAYMOND JULIUS PALMARES — cured by a rose petal

BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL — former Bishop of Borlongan, Eastern Samar

DON PAOLO RABAGO — one of six boys who witnessed the statue of Our Lady of Carmel at Lipa come to life in 1991

RENCIS RABAGO — one of six boys who witnessed the statue of Our Lady of Carmel at Lipa come to life in 1991

MONSIGNOR SIMEON RACELIS — Chancellor, Diocese of Lucena

MONSIGNOR GREGORIO P. SALVATUS — Former Secretary to Verzosa; at present, Protonotary Apostolic Supernumerary, Lucena

MARIANO SIDECO — Engineer who designed and helped build church at Lipa Carmel

SISTER BERNADETTE OF THE MOTHER OF GOD, O.C.D. — (Sr. Bernadette Bautista) at Lipa Carmel

SISTER BERNADETTE CASTILLO, O.C.D. — at Jaro Carmel

SISTER CLOTILDE NICHOLAS, O.S.A. — former Sister Monica of the Savior at Lipa Carmel, now with the Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation

SISTER ELIZABETH OF THE SACRED HEART, O.C.D. — Portress
of Lipa Carmel in 1948

SISTER MARY CELINE OF JESUS, O.C.D. — at Lipa Carmel

FELICIDAD TORRES — witness to 1948 petal showers and other
supernatural events

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A product of St. Paul's College of Manila, June Keithley-Castro is a prominent broadcast journalist and television personality in the Philippines. In March 1988, the Republic of the Philippines awarded her the Medal of Honor — one of the highest distinctions ever to be bestowed on a Filipino citizen — for her courageous radio coverage of the Philippine Revolution of 1986, which toppled the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos. For her vital role in this popular revolt, she has also received special citations from religious and civic groups, among them the Archdiocese of Manila's Catholic Radio Awards, the Rotary Club of Manila, the Federacion Internacional de Abogadas, and the **Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster sa Pilipinas** (Association of Broadcasters in the Philippines).

Ms. Keithley-Castro has produced several television shows aired locally, most notably: "The Late Hour With June and Johnny," a one-hour late night talk show which ran for five years; "The Children's Hour," a one hour children's show which was aired for approximately six years; and "The Keithley Report," a documentary series which explored various national issues as well as religious topics. This series has garnered special citations from the Archdiocese of Manila's Catholic Television Awards. The Keithley Report entitled "Negros: A Race Against Time" won several awards, including one for most outstanding journalism.

She is currently producing a documentary series on the apparitions of the Virgin Mary, entitled "The Woman Clothed With the Sun," filmed in various locations around the world. Several episodes have been aired over national television in the Philippines, and the series has been presented to Pope John Paul II as an official gift from His Excellency, Oscar Villadolid, the Philippine Ambassador to the Holy See. In April 1992, the two-part episode on the apparitions of Lipa, Philippines was awarded Most Outstanding Television Special for 1991 by the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

Her work has aroused great interest and in relation to this, she has now become a much sought-after speaker and has travelled extensively to relay the supernatural events and Marian apparitions occurring all over the world. She has also been asked to write for a number of international publications.

She is a founding member and president of the Center for Peace Asia, a non-stock, non-profit foundation devoted to spreading the messages of peace and focuses on prayer as a means to achieving this.

She is married to another famous broadcast journalist, Angelo Castro Jr., currently anchorperson of the high-rating Philippine news program, "The World Tonight." They have a son, Angelo Diego, now seventeen.

She is now devoting all of her time to spreading the messages of peace.

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This book is an adaptation from the original television script of the award-winning two-part episode on Lipa of the documentary series on the apparitions of the Virgin Mary, entitled *The Woman Clothed with the Sun*. Numerous photographs and bibliographical references have been added together with the crucial original account of the events at Lipa Carmel in 1948 by the then prioress of the convent, the late Mother Mary Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D.