

**THE APPARITION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AT LIPA:**

**A COMPILATION OF
STATEMENTS**

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 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 , 1951

(Signed) Gabriel M. Reyes
Archbishop of Manila

(Signed) Cesar M. Guerrero
Bishop of San Fernando

(Signed) Mariano Madriaga
Bishop Of Lingayen
Segovia

(Signed) Juan Sison
Auxiliary Bishop of Nueva

(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

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

DISPERSAL

I was present when Alfredo Verzosa 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 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 Versoza 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 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 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!"

APPENDIX D.3

Republic of the Philippines) S.S
Pasig, Metro Manila)

AFFIDAVIT

I, BISHOP GODOFREDO P. PEDERNAL, Filipino, 80 years old and with residence and postal address at NO. 11, Sinciangco St. Quezon City, under oath, state:

1. I am a retired Bishop of Borongan, Eastern Samar
2. In 1947, I was appointed Rector of the Mt. Carmel Seminary in Sariaya, Quezon within the Diocese of Lucena.
3. I held my position as Rector of the said seminary from 1947 up to and until 1968 when I was appointed Bishops of Borongan, Samar.
4. Among my duties as Rector was to bring my seminarians to the Lipa Carmel Convent for study, rest and spiritual immersion.
5. I personally know the late Bishop Alfredo Ma. Obviar of the then Diocese (now Archdiocese) of Lipa. Our friendship dated back in 1938 when he was still then the priest of Lipa Cathedral and the Vicar-General of the said Diocese and I was then a seminarian studying theology at the Lipa Seminary. Since then, I became his close confidante.
6. In 1948 and while I was Rector of the Mt. Carmel Seminary, I visited the Lipa Carmel Sisters on account of the sensational news of the shower or showers of rose petals at or within the premises of their convent. I cannot recall what month it was but I remember that I stood outside the convent and in the open space together with some hundreds of pilgrims or devotees who praying the rosary and were eagerly awaiting for the shower of the rose petals. It was noontime. The convent did not have any chapel yet. It was then being initially constructed. And as I looked up the sky, my attention was suddenly caught by the presence of a great number of rose petals gingerly cascading from the gutter or walls of the convent and gently falling to the ground. I simply marveled at the phenomenon and just stood there quietly to savor the sight of the gentle touch of the rose petals to the ground. It was truly an extraordinary event. And I was very privileged to have witnessed it. But, my mystical experience was suddenly cut short by the commotion caused by several people who started up climbing the convent to retrieve some petals. I was not able to get some for myself. However, several weeks later and during another visit, the late Prioress Mother Cecilia of Jesus, O.C.D. gave me a rose petal I have since kept it not merely as a remembrance of the particular supernatural event I witnessed but more principally as a sacramental.

7. Despite my own personal witness, persistent rumors abounded of the Sisters' alleged use of a blower to stimulate the shower of the rose petals. I felt indignant on hearing these rumors because they were certainly preposterous. The rose petals I saw that noontime defied the law of gravity. If a blower was truly its cause for falling then the rose petals would have fastly scattered to the ground in proportion to the strength of the wind produced by the blower. But the rose petals I saw were like gentle breeze. They wafted or glided in the air for sometime before they slowly descended to the ground.
8. I was also very disturbed why the late Rufino Cardinal Santos and the late Cardinal Vagnozi insisted to the Church hierarchy on the rose petals absence or lack of supernatural quality. Both were adamantly convinced of the truth of the unfair and unkind accusation against the Sisters relative to the alleged use of a blower. To me, their obstinate attitude was a grim reflection on their pre-judgment on the Lipa events without the usual thorough investigation or inquiry expected of an objective and impartial Church authority.
9. My second time to witness the miraculous shower of the rose petals was in 1949. This time, the sisters had already constructed a tent (tolda) outside the convent to protect the pilgrims or devotees from the sun or rain. The tent (tolda) also became the place of assembly for mass by pilgrim or visiting priests and/or for the recitation of the Holy Rosary as the construction of the chapel had not yet been completed. Inside the tent was a platform used for the worship liturgy. I cannot recall what day or month it was but it was 10 a.m and I was then inside the tent and kneeling down on the platform while quietly praying the rosary. From where I was and the walls of the convent was a distance of about 10 meters. Then I saw a big rose appeared from the sky and slowly dropped to and scattered as petals on the ground, again, it was a mystical sight to behold.
10. Even as of this stage. I strongly feel that the Lipa Commission in 1951 was too in a hurry to close its investigation or inquiry. Such haste could only have been the product of a completely biased or prejudiced mind. The sisters failed to disabuse both Cardinals' belief or judgment that the shower was a big fraud.
11. Sometime in 1958, I accompanied Bishop Obviar in his adlimina visit to the Holy See. The Holy Father then was Pope Pius XII. While in Rome, Bishop Obviar remembered Msgr. Morelli who used to be the apostolic delegate to the Philippines succeeding Msgr. Guillermo Piani. Contemporary to his apostolic assignment. Msgr Morelli was also the visitor of all seminaries and dioceses in the Philippines. Pursuant to this mission, Msgr. Morelli had occasion to meet for several times, with Bishop Obviar and the Lipa Carmel Convent were prompted by the reports of the shower of the rose petals. This was circa 1948.
12. During our visit to Msgr. Morelli in Rome, the following exchange of conversation took place:

Msgr. Morelli: "Bishop Obviar, why you Bishops in the Philippines did not insist in telling the Holy Father that the Blessed Mother went to the Philippines?."

Bishop Obviar: "Do you mean that you believe that the Blessed Mother was there?"

Msgr. Morelli: "Your Excellency, twice I saw the very Phenomenon of Fatima repeated in Lipa with the sun revolving there, so much so that I even told my driver to look at the sun I am fully convinced that the Blessed Mother went to Lipa".

13. Thereafter, Msgr. Morelli invited Bishop Obviar and myself to join him for lunch at the Parish of the Catacombs where Msgr. Morelli's brother, a Franciscan, was the Parish Priest.

14. During lunch, their conversation about Lipa continued as follows:

Bishop Obviar: "But Msgr. Morelli, you're here in Rome and within the nose of the Holy Father. Why not be the one to tell the Holy Father that you saw the Blessed Mother in Lipa?"

Msgr. Morelli: "I am a poor retired Msgr., not a Bishop. But if your Bishops will tell, the Holy Father will surely believe".

15. After lunch and before we left, Msgr. Morelli pulled out from the pocket of his cassock a rose petal and showed it to us. He then addressed Bishop Obviar:

"Your Excellency, to show that I am convinced that the Blessed Mother was in Lipa, this petal which I received from Mother Cecilia will not separate from me until I die and unto the next life. This petal will always be with me".

16. Being his confidante. I was with Bishop Obviar when he visited and comforted his dying friends i.e, Bishop Guerrero Archbishop Cuenco and Archbishop Juan Sison in the 1960's. Bishop Obviar's uniform question to them was:

"Why did you sign that declaration about the foolishness of the Lipa Carmel Sisters?"

The Bishops would silently show to Bishop Obviar their own rose petals. Then Bishop Obviar would further say:

"If you believe that the said shower of the rose petals was a sign of the Blessed Mother's presence in Lipa, why did you sign the declaration?"

Their uniform reply was:

"We were forced to sign".

17. Last year, I met with Fr. Marasigan relative to the cause of the beatification of Bishop Obviar. The good priest was interested to know how well I knew the Bishop, I told Fr. Marasigan that was closely associated with Bishop Obviar for more than 25 years. The greater part of that close and filial association occurred when Bishop Obviar became the Bishop of the Diocese of Lucena for 25 years and I became the Bishop of the General and Episcopal Vicar for almost the same period of time. We did a lot of collaborative work for and in the Diocese. Thus, my own personal observation is that Bishop Obviar during his lifetime, possessed a strong and solid Carmelite spirituality worthy of the honor of sainthood.

Further Affiant say naught
November 17, 1994 Pasig, Metro Manila

BISHOP GODOFREDO PEDERNAL
Affiant

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 17th day of November, 1994 in Pasig, Metro Manila

HARRIET O. DEMETRIOU
Presiding Judge
Branch 70, RTC
Metro Manila

THE APRIL 11 1951 DECREE OF ARCHBISHOP SANTOS ET AL. WAS TOTALLY NULL AND UTTERLY VOID.

Can. 125 — § 1. Actus positus ex vi ab extrinseco personae illata, cui ipsa nequaquam resistere potuit, pro infecto habetur.

§ 2. Actus positus ex metu gravi, iniuste incusso, aut ex dolo, valet, nisi aliud iure caveatur; sed potest per sententiam iudicis rescindi, sive ad instantiam partis laesae eiusve in iure successorum sive ex officio.

Can. 125 §1. An act placed out of force inflicted on a person from without, which the person was not able to resist in any way, is considered as never to have taken place.

§2. An act placed out of grave fear, unjustly inflicted, or out of malice is valid unless the law provides otherwise. It can be rescinded, however, through the sentence of a judge, either at the instance of the injured party or of the party's successors in law, or ex officio.

«coercion - noun: the action or practice of persuading someone to do something by using force or threats.»

«duress, n. - threats, violence, constraints, or other action used to coerce someone into doing something against their will or better judgement.

"confessions extracted under duress"

synonyms: coercion, compulsion, force, pressure, pressurization, intimidation, threats, constraint, enforcement, exaction; informal arm-twisting

"their confessions were extracted under duress"

LAW

constraint illegally exercised to force someone to perform an act.»

"ex vi" defined by Lewis & Short: «with might], strength, physical or mental; force, vigor, power, energy, virtue (cf. robur).»

The signatures of the bishops on the April 11, 1951 decree have been demonstrated beyond all shadow of doubt to have been obtained by coercion -- by threat of excommunication. The coercion was therefore of a nature that constitutes force or duress as properly and commonly understood and defined. Therefore, according to Canon 125 § 1, it was an "actus positus ex vi", and therefore, "pro infecto habetur" -- and therefore, "never to have taken place". As such, a decree which is held "pro infecto" is totally null and utterly void, and therefore is incapable of being validly confirmed because it is a juridical nullity.

Hypothetically, if the signatures had been obtained "ex metu gravi, iniuste incusso, aut ex dolo" (out of grave fear, unjustly inflicted, or out of malice), that would constitute undue influence, and the Archbishop of Lipa would have the authority to rescind the decree in accordance with the provision of can. 125 §2. Therefore the overturning of the decree by Archbishop Arguelles is valid beyond all shadow of doubt.

From all the above considerations, it is patent that the April 11, 1951 Decree was canonically null & void; it had never received any juridical confirmation by Pope Pius XII, and it was legitimately struck down by the subsequent decree of approval of the Archbishop of Lipa, S. E. R. Mons. Ramon Arguelles. The CDF has resorted to a desperate act of fraud in order to uphold the 1951 decree, which according to can. 125 must be held "pro infecto" -- and therefore canonically never to have existed

NOTE: A search of the AAS documents from 1951 to 1958 confirms that Pius XII never issued any "definitive confirmation" of the April 11, 1951 decree of Cardinal Santos et al. Previous searches of the Lipa archdiocese archives also produced nothing.



Excerpts from the Booklet Reflections (About the Lipa Apparitions)

By Most Rev. Mariano G. Gaviola, D.D., J.C.D.
Archbishop of Lipa, Batangas
(1981-1991)

PARANORMAL OR DEVIL'S INTERVENTION

In view of the foregoing I would be generous if I were to concede the possibility that the visions of Teresing Castillo, and the message she received, the shower of roses, the healings that took place at different times and places, and all other events related to Our Lady Mediatrix were nothing but paranormal events. Paranormal means they simply cannot be explained scientifically. To my mind, paranormal things belong to the natural order. They do not relate to the sacred, much less the supernatural. But the case of Lipa is contrary because everything that we hear about Mary Mediatrix in Lipa Carmel is always related to the sacred and the supernatural.

On the other hand, it is quite far-fetched, if not a contradiction, to conclude that what happened and continues to happen at Lipa Carmel in connection with the devotion to Our Lady Mediatrix of All Grace, are machinations of Satan. As matter of fact, the messages received by Teresing from Our Blessed Mother are in substance, the same as the messages of Our Lady of Lourdes and Our Lady of Fatima. It is most unseemly of Satan to be giving messages that urge the faithful to pray for the sanctity of priests and religious, to do penance, and make acts of reparation for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. As our Lord Jesus reminds us: "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid to waste. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom last since you say it is by Beelzebul that I cast devils . . ." (*Lk. 11:17-20*).

Obviously, Satan will be destroying his kingdom if he were the author of all the great events at the Lipa Carmel Monastery and related cases.

With regards to the dancing sun, we are told that some scientists explain the phenomenon as natural effect caused by the interaction of the radiance of the sun and the movements of the clouds. Granting that this is true, I find it difficult to explain how it was that several of those present at the Lipa Carmel grounds when I said mass on February 6, 1992, did not see any unusual movements of the sun? Among them were several seminarians of the School of Theology who attested that they has seen nothing unusual on the occasion.

It behooves us to recall further the scriptural passages wherein God proclaims His presence or omnipotence through the movements of the sun, the clouds, and other celestial bodies. (*cfr. Ex. 3:2-3; 14:24; 19:18-19; Mt. 27:45; 52:53; Acts 9:3-5; Rev. 10:1; etc.*)

"Chief Justice and Noted Scientist Convinced Petal Shower a Miracle",

MANILA TIMES, January 26, 1949-

"The miracle of the shower of rose petals at the Carmelite Convent in Lipa City is not the work of man but of God," declared Chief Justice Manuel V. Moran of the Supreme Court, in an interview yesterday in Lipa City.

"There can be no doubt about it," said the Chief Justice. "If I am not absolutely convinced, I would not waste my time coming to this place."

"I have made my own investigation," he added, "so I know whereof I speak."

Chief Justice Moran arrived in Lipa City yesterday morning in one of his periodic pilgrimages to the scene of the miracle. He was accompanied by Mrs. Moran.

"No body of men," according to Dr. Manuel Roxas, a scientist, "had discredited miracles in the past as the scientists, but the 20th century scientist must believe in miracles or the whole foundation of science will collapse."

He said that as a scientist, his first instinct is to investigate. He said he made a thorough check of the "flying petals" and that he is "convinced no human hand had intervened in the miracle".

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.



Mary, Mediatrix of All Grace

- I. Fr. Richard A. Hernandez and Sr. Julie S. Micoso, MCSH, chair and member respectively of the *New Commission to Investigate the 1948 Lipa Apparition* created by Most Rev. Ramon C. Arguelles, D.D., Archbishop of Lipa, visited me last May 26, 2010 and personally requested me to assist them in their work. On May 30, 2010, I joined Fr. Hernandez, Sr. Micoso and the other members of the Commission, Dr. Irma C. Coronel, Dr. Nina M. Cadiz, Dr. Leuvy M. Tandug and Dr. Dolores de Leon, in a discussion about their work in the commission. I shared some thoughts on the theological aspects of the account of Teresita Castillo and I was requested to put the same in writing.
- II. The 1978 *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith Document on Apparition Discernment*¹ presents a set of criteria for judgment concerning apparitions and supposed revelations. An apparition may be judged as authentic, or at least probably genuine, if it passes these criteria that include, among others, the conformity of the supposed revelation with theological doctrines and the absence of any doctrinal error attributed wrongly to God or to the Blessed Virgin Mary "(taking into account, however, the possibility that the subject may add something by their own activity—even if this is done unconsciously—of some purely human elements to an authentic supernatural revelation, these having nevertheless to remain free from any error in the natural order. Cf. St Ignatius, *Spiritual Exercises*, n. 336)"
- III. The account of the apparition and messages of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Teresita Castillo was published without the customary publication details though it bears the *Nihil Obstat* by Msgr. Adelio A. Abella, P.A., of the Archdiocese of Cebu and the *Inprimatur* of His Eminence Ricardo Cardinal Vidal, DD, Archbishop of Cebu dated March 15, 2008. This official attestation (*nihil obstat*) that the account of the 1948 Lipa apparition written by Teresita Castillo contain nothing that is contrary to faith and morals as well as the final approval for printing (*imprimatur*) by Cardinal Vidal substantially fulfill the required evaluation of the doctrinal soundness of the account of the apparition and the messages attributed to the Blessed Mother. It is important to note, however, that the 1948 Lipa Apparition passes said criterion of doctrinal soundness provided that the published narrative signed by Teresita Castillo on May 27, 1997,² contains all she experienced and everything she heard the BVM said; that,

¹ <http://www.theotokos.org.uk/pages/appdisce/cdftexte.html> Accessed May 31, 2010.

² Her diary was ordered burned by the ecclesiastical authorities, hence the necessity of re-writing everything from memory.



except for an honest memory lapse, nothing was withheld or altered in any way in order to make the account conform with her beliefs or knowledge of Church teaching.

IV. Though the theological soundness of the account and messages of the 1948 Lipa Apparition has been duly ascertained by competent ecclesiastical authorities, there are still some questions that beg for answers.

A. There are aspects of the account that strikingly resemble the Apparition at Lourdes. First, the command to make a statue for Our Lady explicitly mentions Lourdes: *I wish my statue to look as you see me and as big as that of Our Lady of Lourdes which stands inside the cloister.*³ Second, just like St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes, Teresing was asked by a voice to (a) to eat grass (b) and to prepare to meet Our Lady for fifteen consecutive days: *"Do not fear, my child! Kiss the ground. All that I tell you must obey. For fifteen consecutive days, come to visit me in this spot. Eat a little grass, my child."*⁴ Third, both were forewarned about a life of suffering: *"My daughter, suffering will always be with you until the end of your life."*⁵

Prior to the 1948 extraordinary events in Carmel Lipa, did Teresita Castillo have any access to any material about the apparition to St. Bernadette Soubirous in Lourdes? If she did, she was probably inspired, even strongly influenced what she thought she "experienced" in Carmel. However, if she did not have any chance to read or hear about certain details of the apparition at Lourdes prior to her experience of the extraordinary events, could this be a significant indication that the apparition in Lipa is authentic because its resemblance (in some unique aspects) to a confirmed apparition is *bona fide* and not at all fabricated?

B. The command *"to wash Mother Prioress's feet, and to drink the water I used"*⁶ hardly makes sense to modern ears. Yet this is not entirely unprecedented in religious hagiography; the examples of St. Catherine of Siena drinking the pus from a woman's tumor, and St. Margaret Alacoque swallowing the

³ Entry dated September 16, 1948, *I Am Mary Mediatrix of All Grace*, p. 18.

⁴ Entry dated September 12, 1948, *Ibid.*, p. 15. Compare this with the February 18, 1858 message to St. Bernadette Soubirous: *She smiled and said that it was not necessary for her to write what she had to say to me, but asked if I would do her the favour of coming for a fortnight [literally 14 nights or 15 days]. I told her that I would. And the message on February 25, 1858: The fourth time I was able to drink it. She made me eat grass growing in the same place where I had drunk; once only; I do not know why. [Italics supplied].*

⁵ Entry dated August 7, 1948, *Ibid.*, p. 4. Compare this with the February 18, 1858 report of St. Bernadette: *She told me also that she did not promise to make me happy in this world, but in the next.*

⁶ Entry October 18, 1948, *Ibid.*, p. 5.



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vomit of a sick nun⁷, are hard to understand but are extraordinary examples of manifesting unconditional acceptance of the other. Did Teresing ever hear of such stories as part of her religious formation and was therefore inspired or influenced by them? If she did not, where did she get such idea?

V. The Marian title **Mediatrix**⁸ of All Graces has a long history.⁹ Pope Benedict XV, acting upon the petition of Desiré-Félicien-François-Joseph Cardinal Mercier, Archbishop of Mechelen, Belgium, declared that in Belgium and other dioceses that would request it, the Feast of Mary Mediatrix of All Graces will be celebrated on the 31st of May. The Vatican II Dogmatic Constitution of the Church *Lumen Gentium* affirmed the title "Mediatrix" as one of the legitimate titles of the BVM: *Therefore the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix. This, however, is to be so understood that it neither takes away from nor adds anything to the dignity and efficaciousness of Christ the one Mediator* (LG 62). Though the Council did not explicitly acknowledge the title "Mediatrix of All Graces," it used as reference papal teachings that affirm the universal mediation of the Blessed Mother. For instance, in the footnote (LG Chapter VIII footnote #17) to the aforementioned passage, the Council cites, among others, the Encyclical of St. Pius X, *Ad diem illum*, Feb. 2, 1904 where the Pope wrote: *But Mary as St. Bernard fittingly remarks [De Aquaeductu 4] is the 'channel' or, even, the neck, through which the body is joined to the head, and likewise through which the head exerts its power and strength on the body. 'For she is the neck of our Head, by which all spiritual gifts are communicated to His Mystical Body' [St. Bernardine of Siena, Quadrag. De Evangelio aeterno, Sermo X, n. 3. c. 3.]*¹⁰

⁷ See Cristina Mazzoni, *The Women in God's Kitchen* (New York: Continuum, 2005) p. 100.

⁸ The title "Mediatrix" does not in any way diminish the unique mediation of Christ. The BVM, even ordained ministers may be called "mediators". St. Thomas Aquinas explains: "Properly speaking, the office of a mediator is to join together and unite those between whom he mediates: for extremes are united in the mean [medio]. Now to unite men to God perfectly belongs to Christ, through Whom men are reconciled to God, according to 2 Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself." And, consequently, Christ alone is the perfect Mediator of God and men, inasmuch as, by His death, He reconciled the human race to God. Hence the Apostle, after saying, "Mediator of God and man, the man Christ Jesus," added: "Who gave Himself a redemption for all." However, nothing hinders certain others from being called mediators, in some respect, between God and man, forasmuch as they cooperate in uniting men to God, dispositively or ministerially." (S. Th. III Q. 26. a1.)

⁹ See Fr. William Most, "Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces" Electronic text (c) Copyright EWTN 1996. <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/marya4.htm> accessed May 30, 2010. See also Gloria Falcão Dodd, "A Pre-Vatican II Theology of Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces" <http://www.motherofallpeoples.com/articles/general-mariology/a-pre-vatican-ii-theology-of-mary-mediatrix-of-all-graces.html> Accessed on May 30, 2010.

¹⁰ Quoted from Fr. William Most, "Church Teaching on Mary as Mediatrix of (All) Graces" Electronic text (c) Copyright EWTN 1996, <http://www.ewtn.com/faith/teachings/marya4a.htm> Accessed on May 30, 2010. Emphasis supplied.



- VI. The messages attributed to the Blessed Mother (Lipa 1948) are already part of the faith and practice of the Church e.g., the loving obedience of the Blessed Mother to Jesus, the need to pray especially for priests and consecrated persons, the importance of praying and offering sacrifices for those who do not believe etc. But the self-appellation "*I am Mary Mediatrix of All Grace*"¹¹ seems unprecedented and invites a closer theological scrutiny. It seems novel because the title that was known until 1948 uses the plural: *Mediatrix of All Graces*. If Teresing had heard of the Marian feast in Belgium or learned about the movements that advocate the definition of a 5th Marian Dogma, she must have wondered whether she heard the BVM inaccurately; she must have been tempted to "correct" what she thought would be imprecise, for until that time, the title was *Mediatrix of All Graces* (plural) and not *Mediatrix of All Grace* (singular). To be sure, this is a matter for theologians to study and debate.

BUT WHAT IF the message truly came from the Blessed Mother and Teresing heard her accurately? Then, it appears that the BVM was *correcting, if not refining*, a title accorded to her earlier! Her feast as "*Mediatrix of All Graces*" was already being celebrated since 1921. **IF** she truly revealed herself in 1948 as "*Mediatrix of All Grace*," was she conveying an important teaching about how we should look at her proper place in salvation history, in our journey back to the Father? Could it be that the BVM is inviting us to look at her mediatory role as *distributrix*¹² of all graces as subordinate to and grounded on her more important role as the Mother of "*Divine Grace*,"¹³ i.e., Mother of Jesus Christ who is Uncreated Grace¹⁴ and Mediator of ALL graces. In other words, Mary's Universal Mediation flows from her cooperation in the Incarnation, the same

¹¹ Entries dated September 26, 1948 and November 12, 1949, *I Am Mary Mediatrix of All Grace*, pp. 24 and 28.

¹² Fr. Alessandro Apollonio, FI asserts that Mary, Mediatrix of All Graces can only be understood properly in the restricted sense of Mary's role as "Distributrix of graces after Calvary": "St. Bonaventure identifies three moments in the maternal mediation of Mary, taken in the broad sense: the moment of begetting the price of our salvation, the moment of paying the price on Calvary, and the moment of distributing the price of salvation which she possesses in the time of the Church. It is to this last phase of her mediation that the title 'Mary, Mediatrix of all graces,' is commonly referred." Fr. Alessandro M. Apollonio, F.I., "Mary Mediatrix of All Graces" in *Mariology: A Guide for Priests, Deacons, Seminarians, and Consecrated Persons* ed. by Mark Miravalle, STD (Goleta, CA: Queen of Wisdom Books, 2007) p. 429.

¹³ See Litany of Loreto.

¹⁴ "The Uncreated Grace is God Himself, in so far as He, in His love, from all eternity has predetermined the gifts of grace, in so far as He has communicated Himself in the Incarnation of Christ's Humanity (*gratia unionis*), in so far as He indwells in the souls of the justified, and in so far as He gives Himself to the blessed for possession and enjoyment in the Beatific Vision. The Hypostatic Union, the Indwelling and the Beatific Vision, considered as acts are indeed created graces, for they had a beginning in time. But the gift which is conferred on a creature in these acts is uncreated. Created Grace [graces] is a supernatural gift or operation really distinct from God". See Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma* (Rockford Illinois: Tan Books, 1974) p. 220.




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divine mystery that made her *Theotokos* (1st Marian Dogma). The title *Mediatrice* of All Graces (plural) is anchored on her intercessory role in heaven after the Assumption (4th Marian Dogma). Certainly, Mary did mediate or intercede for the miracle at Cana to happen; but it does not mean that she interceded for all the other miracles performed by Jesus during his earthly ministry. **Mary was already "Mediatrice of All Grace" long before she can be rightly called "Mediatrice of All Graces".** In other words, the title "Mediatrice of All Graces ([plural] Mary as *distributrice* of "created graces" from her privileged position in heaven) is subordinate to and dependent upon the Divine Motherhood of Mary whereby she became the *Mediatrice of All Grace* ([singular] Mary as *Mother of Divine Grace, Uncreated Grace, Jesus, Son of God*). The title "Mediatrice of All Grace" guards against the error of supposing that since she mediates all graces, one could receive grace from the BVM alone, apart from Christ. Addressing her as "Mediatrice of All Grace" makes us ever mindful of her intimate bond with Jesus Our Lord; it makes us focus our attention more on Divine Grace rather than graces, on the Giver than the gifts.

Humbly submitted to the members of the Commission for whatever good purpose it may serve them.


Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP
June 1, 2010

Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III, OP was appointed a member of the International Theological Commission for 2014-2019. It is the duty of the International Theological Commission to study doctrinal problems of great importance, especially those which present new points of view, and in this way to offer its help to the Magisterium of the Church, particularly to the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith in the Vatican to which it is attached. The President of the International Theological Commission is the Cardinal Prefect of the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

Our Lady Mediatrix of All Graces Aokpe



Summary

The Virgin Mary began appearing in October 1992 to a twelve-year-old girl Christiana Agbo in Aokpe located in the small village in a remote area of Nigeria.

Timeline

October 1992	<p>The Virgin Mary appears, from October 1992 to a girl of twelve-year-old Christiana Agbo in Aokpe located in the small village in a remote area of Nigeria. The first appearance came in the morning, while Christiana is intent on collecting herbs in the fields. The first appearance came in the morning, while Christiana was collecting herbs in the fields. After the first signs of light, she saw a beautiful woman floating in the sky. The Virgin looked and smiled without saying a word, was standing on the clouds, had a dress with a veil of shining a blue color that covered her head and fell down on Her back and shoulders, hands clasped on her chest and clutched a rosary.</p> <p>In the first message received from Our Lady, Christiana says: "I am the refuge of sinners. I come from Heaven to gain souls to Christ and to shelter my children in my Immaculate Heart. What I want from you is to pray for the souls of Purgatory, for the world and to console Jesus".</p>
	<p>The public appearances became frequent over time, especially between 1994 and 1995, and brought a large number of people to Aokpe.</p>
July 21, 1993	<p>In the apparition of July 21, 1993 Our Lady invites Christiana to pray fervently for the world long corrupted by sin and foretells the coming of the dark days. Often Christiana has seen the Virgin Mary with tears in Her eyes because of the many souls who go to hell.</p>
Aug 3, 1994	<p>First public pilgrimage.</p>
Aug 4, 1994	<p>Our Lady told Christiana that August 4th would become a special Feast day and on that day she received a Eucharistic miracle. This came true, as Christiana received Holy Communion from an Angel. Fr Samuel Ehatikpo made sure there were two photographers present, one was Fr Emmanuel Idoko, the Bishop's representative and the other was a commercial photographer. This is what Christiana experienced: "I saw the Angel bringing the Host and the Host was bigger than the one we normally receive. The closer the Host came to me, the smaller the Host became and when I was about to receive it, it became normal size. I kept my tongue flat, as Our Lady had previously requested, so it could be photographed."</p>
March 1, 1995	<p>In the message of March 1, 1995, the Blessed Virgin calls for the recitation of the Rosary, saying: "Those of my children who pray the Rosary frequently and commitment will receive many graces, That I know Satan will not be Able to approach them. My children, When You Are assailed by great temptations and problems and how to take your Rosary to me and your problems will be solved. Every time you say "Hail Mary full of Grace" will receive many graces from me. Those who will recite the Rosary will never be damned."</p>

May 1996	The last public appearance took place. The apparitions have continued in private though with less frequency.
	Wanting to devote herself totally to God, the seer has decided to become a carmelite nun, taking the name "Christiana Maria Bambina".
2004	Last apparition to Christiana.
	The local church has proven rather favorable to the apparitions from the beginning though, as the Archbishop John Onaiyekan has pointed out, the Church in these cases is quite cautious and is very rare that you approve of the apparitions while they are still in progress. He gave permission for the construction of the shrine of Our Lady asked. His successor, Bishop Orgah granted the Imprimatur to the publication of the accounts of the apparitions and Gave her permission to pilgrimages.

Description of the Virgin

Christiana saw a beautiful woman floating in the sky. The Virgin looked and smiled without saying a word, was standing on the clouds, had a dress with a veil of shining a blue color that covered her head and fell down on Her back and shoulders, hands clasped on her chest and clutched a rosary.

Messages

In the first message received from Our Lady, Christiana says: "I am the refuge of sinners. I come from Heaven to gain souls to Christ and to shelter my children in my Immaculate Heart. What I want from you is to pray for the souls of Purgatory, for the world and to console Jesus".

In the apparition of July 21, 1993 Our Lady invites Christiana to pray fervently for the world long corrupted by sin and foretells the coming of the dark days.

In the message of March 1, 1995, the Blessed Virgin calls for the recitation of the Rosary, saying: "Those of my children who pray the Rosary frequently and commitment will receive many graces, That I know Satan will not be Able to approach them. My children, When You Are assailed by great temptations and problems and how to take your Rosary to me and your problems will be solved. Every time you say "Hail Mary full of Grace" will receive many graces from me. Those who will recite the Rosary will never be damned. "

Approval

The local church has proved rather favorable to the apparitions from the beginning though, as the Archbishop John Onaiyekan has pointed out, the Church in these cases is quite cautious and is very rare that you approve of the apparitions while they are still in progress. He gave a positive opinion from the construction of the shrine of Our Lady asked. His successor, Bishop Orgah granted the Imprimatur to the publication of the account of the apparitions and gave his permission to pilgrimages.

Prayer

Prayer to Our Lady Mediatrix Of All Graces.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Lady of purity of heart, Lady of good heart, Lady of honour that humbles herself, sweetness of Angels, your heavenly wisdom and your patience, surpass all others. The whole of your life, is a purity of heart that has no stain. Lady the Mediatrix Of All Graces, help us to do without delay the will of Jesus. Make us worthy to receive the gift that has been given to us, so that we will be Holy. Give us the Grace to go and greet Our Lord Jesus. Help us to be pure so that we can see Heaven. Help us always to do the will of Jesus, so that we can share in His glory. *Father, fill us with the Grace of the Holy Spirit."
Amen.

Source: http://www.miraclehunter.com/marian_apparitions/approved_apparitions/aokpe/index.html